

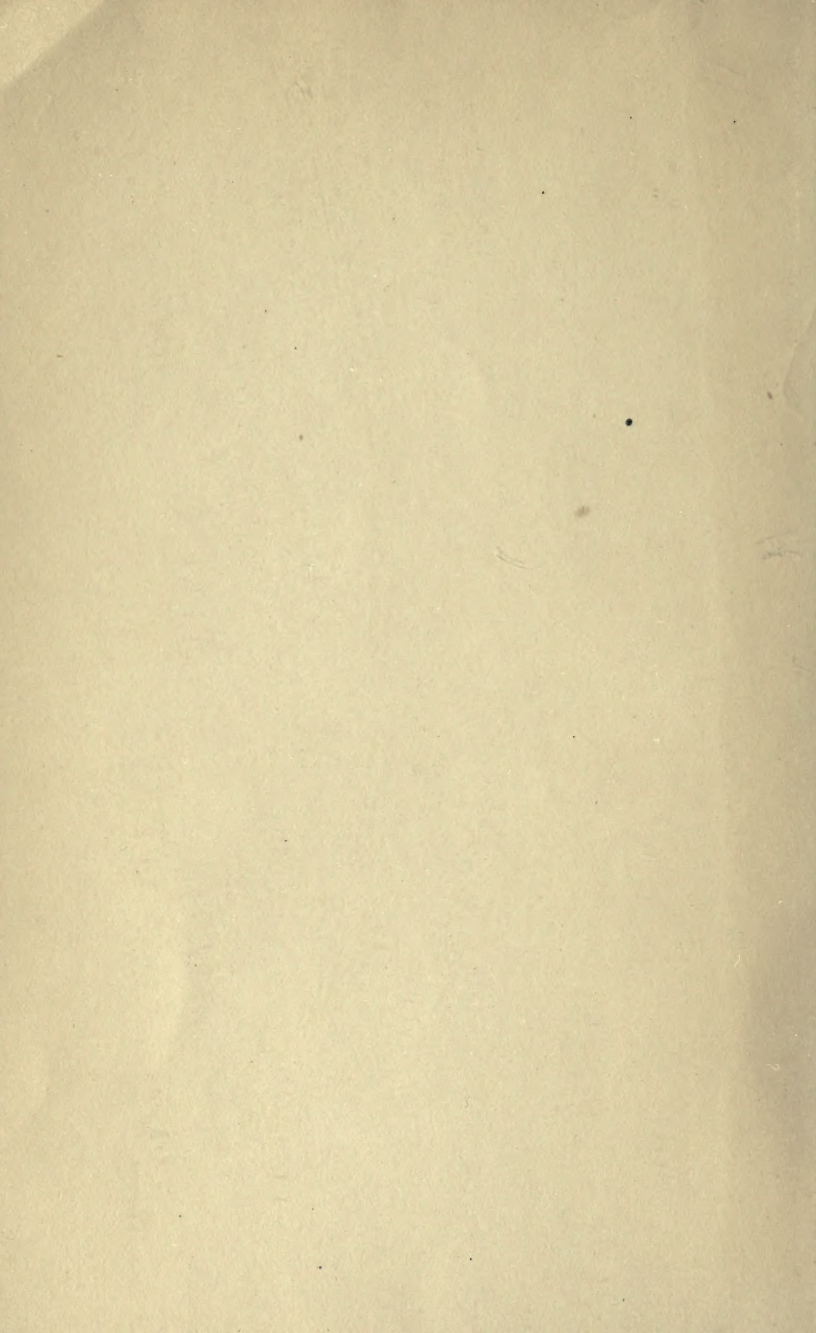
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RAWN

BY
EMERSON
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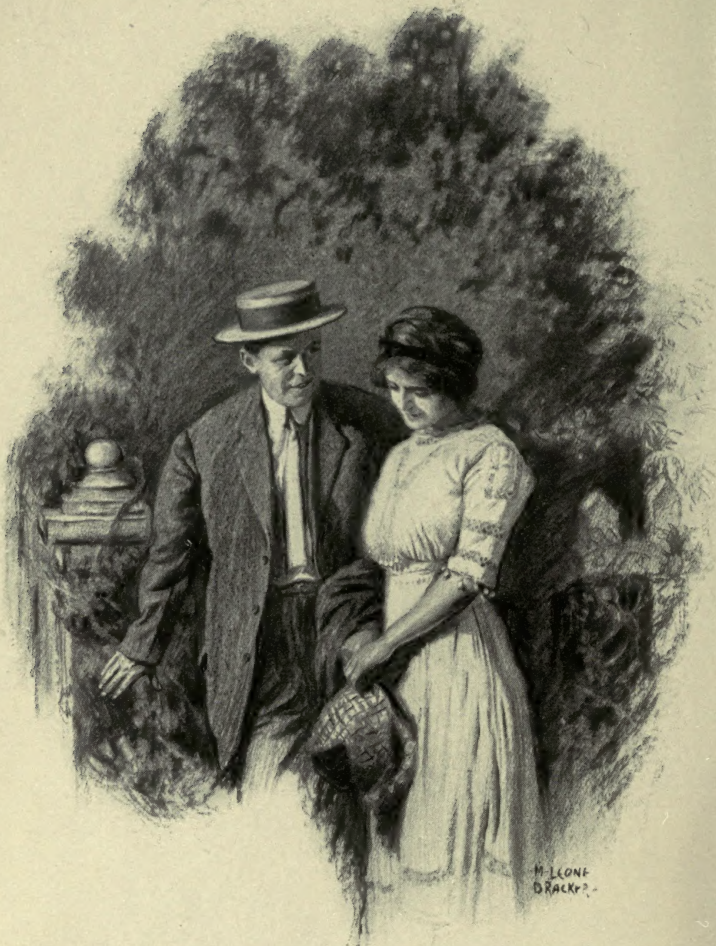
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JOHN RAWN



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JOHN RAWN

Prominent Citizen

By

EMERSON HOUGH

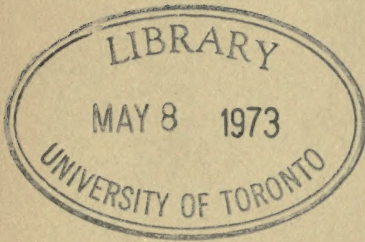
Author of

The Mississippi Bubble, 54-40 Or Fight
The Purchase Price, Etc.

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TO

WOODROW WILSON

ONE OF THE LEADERS IN THE THIRD WAR OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

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JOHN RAWN

JOHN RAWN

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

CERTAIN NOTABLE DETAILS IN GENESIS

ONE John Rawn is to be the hero of this pleasing tale; no ordinary hero, as you might learn did you make inquiry of himself. His history must be set down in full, from beginning to culmination, from delicate flowering to opulent fruitage, from early obscurity to later fame. Such would be his wish; and the wishes of John Rawn long have been commands.

For the most part the early history of any hero is of small consequence. We are chiefly concerned that he shall be tall and shapely, mighty in war and love, and continuously engaged therein from the first moment of his entrance on our scene. Granted these essentials, we customarily pass carelessly over any hero's youth, even as lightly, perchance, over his ancestry. Not so in the case of John Rawn. He himself would say, if asked, that no hero of so exceptional a merit as his own could be thus lightly produced; that indeed not even the three

generations accorded to the making of a gentleman could be called sufficient for the evolution of a personage of mold such as his. Let us yield to a will so imperious, a wish so germane to our own amiable intent. Mr. Rawn shall have all the generations that he likes.

II

John Rawn might, in the caretaking plans of the immortal gods, have been born at any time in the world's history, at any place upon the world's surface. He himself, had he been consulted, might have suggested Rome, Greece, or mediæval England, as offering better field for one of his kidney. He might have indicated certain resemblances between himself and persons who, through virtue given of the immortal gods, have attained the purple, who have held permanent and admitted ascendancy over their fellow-men. As a matter of fact, however, John Rawn was born in Texas—and of Texas at the very spot where, had it been left to his own candid opinion, no John Rawn, no especial hero, ought ever to have been born. The village he honored by his birth—one of seven which now contend over that claim to fame—was the very home of democratic equality; and how could the home of democratic equality be called typical environment for the production of a man believing in the divine right of a very few?

Neither, had John Rawn been consulted in the matter, would he have indorsed the plans of fate in respect to his ancestry any more than he did the workings of the misguided stars in regard to his environment. By right he should have been the offspring of parents for

long generations accustomed to rule, to command, to sway the destinies of others. Yet far from this was the truth in our hero's case.

Which of us can tell what is in an infant's mind? At what day or hour of a child's life does the consciousness of human values in affairs first impinge upon the embryonic mentality? At what date, first feeling itself human and not plant, not oyster nor amoeba, can it logically begin that reproach of its own parentage which to so many of us is held as a personal right, convenient and pleasant because it explains away so many things by way of human failures? At what time, at what moment of John Rawn's life did he, lying in his cradle, and looking up for the first conscious time into the faces solicitously bending above him, realize that after all, in spite of all the plans of the watchful fates, here were no king and queen, no emperor and empress assigned to him as parents, but only an humble Methodist preacher and his still more humble wife?

Truly here was hard handicap even at the start, that of both birth and environment, as he himself would have been first to admit. Not that it could daunt him, not that it could cause a soul like his to feel the pangs of despair. No; it meant only that much further to travel, that much higher to climb. This American republic was expressly framed for such as Mr. Rawn. The issue never was to be called in doubt. From that first hour of consciousness of his ego which marks the real birth of a human soul, John Rawn must have said to himself that success was meant for him; that not all the hostile array of circumstances, birth, heredity and environment, could do more than temporarily balk his aim. From the cradle, indeed for generations un-

counted—as many as he likes—before the cradle, John Rawn believed in himself. How can we fail to join him in that belief?

III

It was rarely that ever a smile enlivened the somewhat heavy features of young John Rawn, even in the earliest stages of his babyhood. Rarely did the mirth of any situation bring up in his face an answering dawn of appreciation. He was a serious child, as all admitted even from the first. He grew to be a grave boy, a solemn youth. He made no jests, nor smiled at those of others. There was a corrugation between his brows before he was twenty years of age. In his declamations at the exercises of the village school, his hand went instinctively into a bosom not yet ten years of age; his forelock fell across his brow before he was twelve; already his gestures were large and wide, his voice prematurely deep before he had reached fourteen. He was of that temperament which, in accordance with the term, takes itself seriously. It is astonishing what virtue lies in that habit. The world, sometimes for many years, indeed sometimes permanently, accepts seriously those who seriously accept themselves. Many of the most colossal asses ever born have not "Ass" written on their tombstones, where righteously it so very frequently belongs in the history of the great.

IV

Curious persons might have found certain explanations for these traits in the calling, the temper and training of the father of John Rawn. In that time and

place, a minister of the gospel was a man of whom all stood in awe. He was not much gainsaid, not much withstood, not much disapproved. His conclusions were announced for acceptance, not for argument. At best he was only to be avoided, if one dreaded the look of the clerical eye, the denunciation of the clerical tongue. Other men might be met, might be antagonized, might be overcome by fist or thumb or firearms, per example; not so the parson of the village church.

It is an excellent profession; that of minister of the gospel. The ranks of none offer better men than the best types of that profession, large men, strong men, just men, not doing preaching for a business, but really wishing to counsel and aid frail humanity as it marches among the perpetual pitfalls, the perpetual hardships of human life. It is an exceedingly good religion of itself, that merely of helping your fellow-man, of saying something to soften and better him, of giving to him something of hope and courage when he is in need of them. Let us not argue whether or not a divine spirit can become mortal, whether or not Christ was divine. We know by virtue of abundant human testimony that He was a great and kindly Man, a great and adorable Human Being, the greatest of whom we know in all our human history. And that man who makes the creed of the greatest of us all his own, who lives kindly and helpfully and modestly, with no blare of trumpet, doing simply and silently that which his human hands find to do; that man nearest to the greatest Man of whom we know, the one who went closest to making human life endurable, who took humanity farthest away from the cruel creed of the jungle—that minister of the gospel, let us say then, who lives as is

possible for one of his calling to live, and attains in that calling what may be attained, may be, and not infrequently is, a splendid human being.

But he is worth our admiration when he is worth it; not necessarily otherwise. A minister of the gospel may not always be the central figure of that religious fervor which has come sporadically and spasmodically to men under many creeds, since man began to think aloud, to doubt and despair in public, and to pray in company. Besides, there are ministers and ministers. Some are men naturally large and are so accepted. Others, alas! bulk larger than really they are, by virtue of the fact that always they apparently have prevailed; whereas, in truth, they only have met small opposition.

'Tis a sweet fashion of life which allows us always to have our own way! Nor is it to be denied that when the preacher stands before the flock, his disordered hair falling above his brow, his eyes flashing, his breath sobbing in his emotion; when he hurls out questions to which he knows there will be no answer; when he makes one assertion after another to which he knows there is to be no contradiction; when he rules, sways, expounds, glorifies, waxing greater in stature out of the very situation in which he stands—let us not deny that he is then in the way—the simple and forgivably human way—of coming more and more into the belief that he himself is as great as the doctrines which he expounds. There are martyrs in history because of human convictions which led them to contradict the church. There are other and far more numerous martyrs, made such because they dared not contradict it.

Given, then, a man of rawboned frame, of virile

physical health, and of pronouncedly good opinion of himself, this is perhaps the very profession of all others which would be most apt to build up that man in his own eyes into a personage of considerable stature. Such a man might easily regard himself as set apart from his fellow human beings—a feeling which Christ Himself never had, nor any great man in or out of history before Him or after Him. It is understandable that such a man, of such a profession, might be the very one to find his philosophy feeding upon itself; with the net result of an inordinate, ingrown egotism. And this ingrown egotism in himself might, in the case of his son, become an egotism congenital. There are ministers of the gospel, and other ministers of the gospel. John Rawn, Senior, was of this particular and less desirable sort. We mention him, having promised our hero all the analysis and all the generations he may desire; and being, moreover, commendably anxious fully to account for him and his many noteworthy peculiarities.

V.

Had John Rawn, our hero, been able in his childhood to figure out that, after all, God and the undying stars had no special grudge against him in assigning his birth to a humble inland village; had he been able to picture to himself his real value as a human unit; had he been able to understand his own explanation,—that is to say this explanation of him which we so patiently have given—had he been able to qualify his own mind as that of a congenital egotist, and hence to see himself naturally come by certain phases of his character—he might have smiled and have been differ-

ent. He might one day have extended his hand to his fellow-man understandingly, might have gone through life much as other men indeed, dying simply and without much outcry about it, as most of us do, and living with small disturbance of the world's equilibrium, as most of us also do. But in that deplorable case there would have been no John Rawn as we know him, and no story about him worth the telling. Let us, therefore, beg to disagree even with him, and not hold it as entire misfortune that he was born in an unstoried spot, and of parents one of whom, by reason of his natural character and of his calling, was wont to consider himself the partner, and not necessarily the junior partner, of a Divine Providence.

CHAPTER II

PURELY INCIDENTAL

I

TO be sure John Rawn had a mother, but that is merely an incidental matter for one who really was brooded among the spheres, and who accepted a mother only as a necessary means to incarnation. We need accord no more than scant time to a mere mother.

There was in the character of the elder Rawn's wife little to offset the tendencies transmitted by the father. Had she herself been a trace further removed from the blind submission of a jungle past in womanhood, it might have been that the offspring of these two had been accorded a better insight into the real situation of mankind, might perhaps even have been given a saving sense of humor, a better valuation of human affairs as pertaining to himself, and of himself as related to human affairs. The truth, however, is that Mrs. Rawn, the preacher's wife, was simply a preacher's wife. She was a machine for gratifying a certain part of her husband's nature, a well-nigh apogamic contrivance for rearing children, an appliance for tending tables and sweeping carpets, and going to prayer meetings, or perhaps—on rare and much-coveted occa-

sions—for acting as witness in parsonage marriage ceremonies, the which might haply produce a fee from the bridegroom, temporarily generous ; which fee, in a moment of aberration, might even pass from parson to parson's wife. It is decreed that the background of a ministerial life shall be of neutral hue, in order that the more brilliantly shall shine the central figure of the scheme. The minister himself, unctuous, bland, grows less unctuous and bland as he turns from some comelier sister to his own partner in life, colorless, silent, dutiful, devoted. There is but one family perihelion, and he is the one planet thereat. At most a pale and distant moon may circle about him, perhaps concerned with domestic tides, but not admittedly related to the affairs of night and day.

It is not known, nor is it important, whence Mrs. Rawn came, or how she happened to marry her lord, John Rawn, Senior, the Methodist preacher in the little Texas town. They were married when they arrived at this place, and had been for some years. No one knows whence they came, no man can tell whither they have gone. John was the first child granted to them as answer to his father's grumbling ; the latter, very nobly and righteously, dreading what calamity the world must suffer did none come to perpetuate his race. He was a great preacher. He had swayed his multitudes. He had seen a hundred souls, as he termed them, grovelling upon the floor in the height of some revival when the grace of the Lord had moved itself mightily upon the people, thanks to him, partner upon the ground, whose voice had prevailed thereabout. It would cause any just man to shudder—the mere thought of such merit lacking progeny. But the prayers

of the righteous avail much. He had, at last, a son, our hero; none less.

II

These necessary and essential preliminaries now all stand adjusted; and we are able finally to say that John Rawn at least and at last was born, silently, quietly, with small rebellion on the part of his mother. He lay there in his first cradle, silent, a trifle red, a slight frown upon his face, a trace of gravity in his features, as he ventured an introspective look within the confines of his couch, and for the first time discovered that wholly interesting, remarkable, indeed wonderful human being, Himself.

Having assured himself that he was here, John Rawn sighed, turned over in his cradle, and presently fell asleep, well assured that, although He had selected Texas for this event, God after all was in His heaven, and that, in the circumstance, all in due time would be well with the world. Could any hero of his years have acted with a finer, a larger generosity?

CHAPTER III

IN VICTORY GENEROUS

I

THE youth of John Rawn early began to show that consistency in character which marked him later in his life. From the first, as we have said, he took himself seriously; indeed, regarded himself with a reverence akin almost to solemnity. Plain wonder possessed his soul when any event fell not wholly to his liking. If the hand that rocked his cradle failed from weariness, his reproof was not so much that of anger or expostulation as that of an aggrieved surprise. When first he began to walk he gravely reserved to himself the spotlight of all solar or sewing circles. Ladies visiting the parsonage unconsciously accepted his estimate of himself, even in those days. Familiarities were not for such a child as this. It began to be rumored about that here was one set apart for great things. Most frequently parents are alone in this manner of belief as to their offspring; but the severity of countenance, the grave assuredness of young John Rawn, forced this belief upon the entire community. A calm, serene certainty of himself was written on his brow.

Youth is for the most part irreverent of other youth,

that is true, and at times young Mr. Rawn was rudely handled by others of his age. In such cases tears came to his eyes forsooth, but not tears of mere anger or anguish. They were tears of surprise, of regret, of wonder! His protest, when he fled to the comfort of his mother's bosom, was not of unmanly weakness, but of astonishment and incredulous surprise that any should have smitten the Lord's anointed. This surprise for the most part prevented him either from turning the other cheek, or smiting the cheek of the oppressor; one or the other of which courses, it must be admitted, commonly is held admirable among men, and especially among heroes.

In his younger school-days there was a way about young Mr. Rawn. He did not really care for plodding, yet he was aggrieved if not accorded rank among his fellow pupils. His spelling, not of the best in the belief of others, seemed to him quite good enough, because it was his own. When sent to the foot of the class he departed thither with a bearing wholly dignified and calm.

Even in these early days his features were in large mold, even then his abundant hair fell across his brow. His eyes were blue and prominent, his nose distinct, his lower lip prominent, protruding and in times of great emotion semi-pendulous. Even thus early he seemed old, serious, foreordained. To tell a being such as this that he could not spell was mere *lèse majesté*. He stalked through school, set apart by fate from his fellow-beings, amenable to few rules, superior to such restrictions as commonly hedge in lesser souls orthographically, socially, or otherwise.

Much of this might have been remedied by kindly

application of educational or parental rod, but young Mr. Rawn remained largely unchastened. His parents did not care to punish him, and his teacher did not dare to do so. Was he not the minister's son? If his mother had misgivings they were well concealed. She herself only shuddered in her soul when she heard the rotund voice of the master of the house explain, in contemplation of his first born, "How much he is like me!" Yes, he was like. His mother knew how like.

II

At that time and in that part of the country this little western village might have been called almost a little world of itself. Estimates of men and affairs were such only as might grow out of the soil. The great world beyond was a thing but vaguely sensed of any who dwelt here. The town was apart from the nearest railway, in a section where rural simplicity amounted at times almost to frontier savagery. Now and then a lynching broke the quiet of the community. The local vices and virtues came out of a life but recently individual and unrestrained. It seemed only chance that young Rawn did not run wild, like many other of the youth of that town, who, trained by custom in arms and excess, disappeared from time to time, passing on to the frontier, then not remote.

Why did not John Rawn naturally trend toward violence, why did the frontier not call out to him? There was one great reason—he was a coward.

Cowardice is a trait sometimes handed down from father to son, indeed most usually it comes of heredity or ill-health. Sometimes it is fought down by reason,

sometimes it is long concealed by artifice. Often it is hidden behind physical stature. Most frequently it is left unsuspected, sheltered behind an air of dignity. Money conceals much of it. Young Rawn was much like his father before him. Perhaps his father never had stopped to think that personal conclusions were matters he had never been called upon to carry to an end with any fellow-man. Peter Cartwright was no saint of his. There was no need, in his belief, to put spiritual or mental questions to the acid and unpleasant test of physical contact. The son, given by nature a considerable stature and gravity for his years, continued in the same fiction, not suspecting that it was fiction. There were larger boys than he, but chivalry restrained these. There were smaller boys than he, but these feared him by reason of the valor which it was supposed he owned. The ranks of life opened before him readily and easily. He stalked forward, with small opposition, accepted at his own estimate of himself; as presently we shall set forth in many valuable instances.

III

It may be supposed that, in a rural community of this sort, living was cut down pretty much to the bone of actual necessities. There was no excess of comfort, and, although there was little lack, luxury was a thing undreamed. Transportation was in that day costly and inefficient, the world not so small then as it is now, so that there was less interchange of the products of distant countries and localities. For instance, there were orange groves within three hundred miles of this little village, yet rarely was an orange to be seen there.

Flour, salt, coffee, bacon, Bibles, six-shooters, essential things, were carried thither, not luxuries and trifles. The family was its own world. In large part, it tilled its own fields and ran its own factories. Mrs. Rawn molded the candles which made the bedroom lights and those by which she sewed—though not that by which her husband read and wrote—in a kettle in the backyard at butchering times, when suet came the parson's way. She made her husband's long black coats, building them upon some prehistoric pattern. She made, mended and washed his shirts, hemmed his stocks and darned his socks for him. Using the outworn ministerial cloth in turn, she made also, in due time, the garments of the son and heir, even building for him a cap, with ear-lappets, for winter use. Her own garments might have been seen by the most casual eye to have been the product of her own hands. Yet, this home was not much different from others, where countless things then were done domestically which now are fabricated in factories and purchased through many middlemen. The lockstep of our civilization was not then so fully in force.

Money was a rare commodity in any such community, and any manner of personal indulgence was for but few. If, for instance, there was beef on the parsonage table, it was the parson alone who ate it, not his wife. Once he came home with two lemons, which had been given him, perhaps as a peace-offering, by a generous storekeeper. These he ordered made forthwith into lemonade; the which, forthwith also, he himself drank, offering none to the sharer of his joys; nor did she find anything either unusual or reproach-worthy in this act. You wonder at these things?

They happened in another day, among people with whom you could not be expected to be familiar—your fathers and mothers; persons not in the least of our class.

IV

In these circumstances—since we have promised value in some specific instance—a certain interest attaches to a little event which nowhere else, save in some such village, would have been noted or could have been possible. The leading local merchant, in a burst of enterprise, had imported a couple of clusters of bananas from New Orleans, the first ever brought into the town. For a time none of the citizens purchased, and, indeed, it required the grudging gift of a banana or so to establish a local demand. Then—built on the assurance of a wise and much-traveled citizen who had once eaten a banana at Forth Worth—the rumor of the bananas passed rapidly through the town. Swiftly it became an important thing to announce to a neighbor that one had eaten of this fruit. In time, even children partook thereof.

At this time young Mr. Rawn was six years of age, and by reason of his years and his social position at least as much entitled to bananas as any of his like thereabout. Yet, he had none. The tragedy of this wrung his mother's soul. Was it to be thought that this, her son, should be denied any of the good things of life, that he should have less than equal enjoyment of life's privileges in the company of his fellows? The climax came when young Mr. Rawn himself approached his mother's knee, with wonder and surprise upon his face, inquiring why others had bananas, while

he himself, the Lord's anointed, and son of the Lord's anointed, had none. It was at that time that his mother somewhat furtively stole away down the village street. She had a few coppers, saved by such hook and crook as you and I may not know, and these she now proposed to devote to a holy cause.

It was at about this same time, also, that there chanced to pass by, on the sidewalk in front of the parsonage, two boys younger than John Rawn himself. These he regarded intently, for he saw from a distance that each had some suspicious object in his hand. His own suspicions became certainties. Here was visible proof that they, mere common persons, were owners of specimens of that fruit whose excellence was rumored throughout the town. They ate, or were about to eat, while he did not! They had luxuries while he had none! They had not asked his permission, yet they ate! Form this picture well in your mind, oh, gentle reader. It is that of John Rawn and ourselves.

With great gravity and dignity young Mr. Rawn stalked down the brick walk to the front gate of the parsonage yard. Calmly, with no word, but with uplifted hand—nay, merely by his stately dignity—he barred the progress of these two. They paused, uncertain. Then he held out his hand, and, with a growl of command, demanded of these others that which they had regarded as their own. He took it as matter of course that Cæsar should have the things that were Cæsar's; and they who give tribute to our Cæsars now, gave it then.

Having possession of these bananas, which as yet remained unbroken of their owners, young Mr. Rawn showed them that, although these fruits were unfami-

liar to their former owners, they made no enigma to a person of his powers. As though he had done nothing else all his life, he broke open the tender skin and removed the soft interior contents. After this he handed back to each of his young friends the disrupted and now empty skins. Yet, with much kindness, he explained to both that at the bottom of each husk or envelope there still remained some portion of edible contents which, with care upon their part, might yet be rescued. They departed, wondering somewhat, but glad they had been shown how this thing was done; even as you and I humbly thank our great men for robbing us to-day.

Young Mr. Rawn, age six, turned now with much dignity back to the gallery from which he had with much dignity come. He seated himself calmly upon the chair and began to eat that which had been given him of fate, that which had been brought to Cæsar as a thing due to Cæsar. He ate until at last, wearied with his labors, he fell asleep.

v

Note now our humble moral in this short and simple detail of our hero's early years. He was at this moment more nearly full of bananas than any other human being in all the village at that time. Yet he had attained that success at no price save that of the exercise of the resources of his mind. That is genius. Let us not smile at young Mr. Rawn.

His mother, stealing home by the back way with yet other bananas concealed in her apron, presently came upon him and discovered that, after all, her solici-

itude had not been needful. Her son slept, his lower lip protruding, his features grave, his legs somewhat sprawled apart, his mid-body somewhat distended, his head sunken forward, his hands drooping at his side. In one hand, clutched so tightly as to have become a somewhat worthless pulp, his mother discovered the bulk of several bananas; in short, the full quota which had been assigned to two of his fellow-beings. It was genius!

Even at that time there departed up the village street those which had given tribute to Cæsar. They regarded with a certain curiosity the empty husks which had been returned to them—even as you and I regard the husks accorded us by overgreat men to-day. From time to time each nibbled, with small return, although as per instructions, at the base from which the main fruit had been broken. Witness the difference among men. These had bananas for which something had been paid. John Rawn had many, better and bigger bananas, for which nothing at all had been paid! In return for them he had shown their late owners how to open a banana. For the later opening of that which in our parlance we call the melon, John Rawn was now decently under way. Already he was showing himself to be a captain among men.

His mother looked upon him as he slept sprawled in his repletion and made no attempt to remove the uneaten fruit from his hands; indeed, made no query as to where he had obtained it. She did not disturb his slumbers. "How like his father he is!" she whispered to herself, mindful of certain lemons, certain beef-steaks, certain wedding fees, certain gone and wasted years. She did not say: "How dear he is, how sweet,

how manly, how brave, how decent, how chivalrous!" No, with a slight tightening of the lips as she turned back to find her belated sewing, she spoke, as though to herself, and with no peculiar glorying in her voice, "How like he is to his father!" And so took up her burden.

CHAPTER IV

IN LOVE SUCCESSFUL

I

“**B**UT, my dear—but *Laura*, you don’t stop to think!” exclaimed a certain young man to a certain young woman, at a somewhat interesting and important moment of their lives. “You certainly do not mean to say—to tell me—to tell *me*! Why—!”

He ceased, a gasp in his throat at the unbelievable effrontery of the woman who faced him in this situation. All he had asked of her was to marry him. And she had hesitated. It was a thing incredible!

It was Mr. Rawn, our hero. It could have been almost no one else who could have sustained precisely this attitude at precisely such a time. It was not despair, disappointment, anger, chagrin, pique, regret or resentment that marked his tones, but surprise, astonishment! Yes, it must have been John Rawn.

As to the young woman herself, who now turned a somewhat pale face to one side as she left her hand in his, she might have been any one of many thousand others in that city. Her hair was brown, her features regular enough, her complexion nondescript, her garb non-committal. Not a person of ancient lineage, you would have said, or of much education in the world’s

ways, or of much worldly goods—these things do not always come to a saleswoman of twenty-five, whose salary is six dollars a week. Yet her face had in it now a very sweet sort of womanliness, her mouth a tender droop to it. Her eyes shone with that look which comes to a woman's eyes when first she hears the declaration of man's love—the most glorious and most tragic moment in all a woman's life.

The fates ordain which of these it shall be—glory or tragedy. Laura Johnson could not tell, cry in her soul as she might for some forecast shadow from the land of fates to show, visibly, upon the subconscious screen hidden in a girl's heart, the figure of the truth. All this was different from what she had pictured it to be. She had thought that love would come in some tender yet imperious way, that she would know some sudden wave of content and trust and assuredness. There was on her plain, severe face, now a wistfulness that almost glorified it after all. For, indeed, our human loving is most dignified and glorious in what it desires love to be.

He leaned again toward her, insistent, frowning, imperious. This was as she had planned. What, then, lacked? If she had sought for some strong man to sweep her from her calm, why was she now so calm? She asked this swiftly, vaguely, wonderingly, demanding to be told by these same fates which had implanted doubt in her heart, whether this was all that she might ever hope, whether this insufficient fashion was the way in which it came to all women—had come, always, to all the women of the world.

"You surely do not stop to consider," he renewed. "Why, look at me!"

She did look at him, turning about, pushing him away from her that she might, in that one moment of a woman's privilege, look at the being demanding of her her own life. What she saw was not an ill-looking young man of twenty-nine, of rather heavy features, rather a frowning brow, a somewhat prominent light eye, a somewhat pendulous lower lip, abundant darkish hair, abundant confidence in himself. He was tallish, well built, strong, seemed somewhat of a man, yes. And he loved her. At least he had said he did.

Laura Johnson did stop to consider. She considered the face which she saw in the glass beyond his shoulder—her own face, not strikingly handsome. "I might be any one of a hundred girls," she said to herself. "I might be any one of those other hundreds who might be sought out instead of myself," said she. "A girl of my looks and place in life is not apt to have hundreds of opportunities. And I am tired, and puzzled. And I want a home. I want to stop worrying for myself. I would rather worry for some one else. I want to be—" There she paused.

She wanted to be a wife, loved, cherished, supported, comforted and protected. That was what she wanted, though the young of the female sex do not know what they want or why they want it. And certainly she could choose only among the opportunities offered her. This was her first opportunity. It might be her last. Besides all of this, she was a woman. She had always obeyed men all her life, at home, in her daily labors, everywhere. And this man was so insistent, so assured, so confident that this was the right and inevitable course for her—why, he said it again and again—that surely—so she reasoned—she must be crazed not to see

that this was the appointed time, that this was the appointed man.

She sighed a trifle as she laid aside the garment of her girlhood, which had kept her sweet and clean for five and twenty years. She folded both her worn and rather bony hands, put them both in his, and said, with a little smile that ought to have wrung his heart, "Well, John, if—if it must be!"

He did not catch the little sob in her voice. He never knew, either then or at any other time in his life, what it was that lacked in her voice, her face, in her heart, indeed. He never knew, then or at any other time, what a woman is, what she covets, longs for, craves, desires, demands, requires passionately, prizes agonizingly to the last, the very last. He did not waste time to query over these unimportant things. He drew her to him with rude care, kissed her fair and full, and then rose.

"Well, then, I'm sure we're going to do well together, Laura, dear."

She did not answer, but sat waiting, longing eagerly for something she lacked, she knew not what.

John Rawn looked at his watch, turned for his hat, and remarked, "I'll be here to-morrow night, dear, at half-past seven. Right after supper."

II

Our hero, John Rawn, had grown up much as he was planned to be. Since we have been liberal in regard to his genesis before he arrived in the little Texas town, let us be niggardly as to his exodus therefrom, for that is less in importance. It may be seen that

he has grown, through what commonplace conditions let us not ask. As he himself never stopped to think, after his arrival in St. Louis to seek his fortune, whether or not his parents still were living, we ourselves need ask no more than he. Since he by now had well-nigh forgotten the scenes of his youth, so may we forget them. He had come to this northern city to seek his fortune. Here was a part of it, as he coolly reasoned. What is especially worth noting is that he still mentioned his evening meal as supper—and not as dinner.

These twain, about to be one flesh, as witness their sober speech, both ate supper, and not dinner, and had done so most of their lives. They came out of middle class circumstances, very similar in each case. Their lives had been much similar. They both had come to the city to seek their fortunes. She had found hers behind a dry-goods counter, he his—temporarily and in sufferance, of course—as an ill-paid clerk in a railway office. They met now and then as they passed out for luncheon, met betimes at evening as they started home. For a time they met also in the same boarding place, where they had rooms not far apart. It was perhaps propinquity that did it. When this thought came to Laura Johnson, with her first realization that perhaps this young man was making love to her, or was apt to do so, she changed her boarding place at once, actuated by some indefinable feeling of delicacy. She wanted to see if there were no better reason for love-making than that of mere propinquity. But he had followed; and she was pleased at that, almost to the point of ascribing to herself some charm which she herself had not suspected. He came again and again,

daily, each night after supper, as he had said, in fact. She did not deny that she had made all pleasant for him to the best of her ability. And now he was going to come again, after the next supper; only in a different rôle, that of her accepted suitor.

III

That was almost all there was about it. What would you expect of two ill-paid clerks, twenty-nine and twenty-five years of age? What might they have to hope for, more than for each other? Why should the ambition of either leap beyond what was there present, in its own comprehensible world? Why should they not keep on meeting day after day, after supper?

Romance is by no means a necessary thing. The truly necessary thing is supper. John Rawn knew this.

CHAPTER V

IN ADVERSITY TRIUMPHANT

I

IT might with some justice be urged that, thus far in his life, Mr. Rawn has shown little to distinguish him from his fellow-men; that indeed his career has been commonplace almost to the point of lack of interest to others. There are many of us who have been born in this or that small community, who have lived somewhat humdrum lives, have married in a somewhat humdrum way, and who have, in like unspectacular fashion, failed to achieve any distinguished success in affairs. Yet, did we restrict ourselves to this point of view, we must fail of our purpose herein, just as Mr. Rawn himself would have failed had he allowed himself no imagination in his view of himself. For the man who is commonplace and who is aware of the fact, the future is apt to have but little hope, nor is his story apt to hold any interest. In the case of Mr. Rawn the reverse of this was true. He did not rate himself as commonplace. Always he pictured himself as central figure in some large scene presently to be staged. His life was much like ours, and ours are for the most part of small concern to others. But John Rawn heard Voices. They spoke of himself. He saw

a Vision. It was of himself. The trouble with us others is that we bashfully still the voices and timidly wipe the image from our mirrors. Let us pass all these matters with reference to them as small as was Rawn's own.

John Rawn, then, married Laura Johnson, and they lived unhappily ever after. That is to say, she did. As for her lord, he did not notice his wife to any great extent after once they had settled down together, but came to regard her as one of those incidents of life which classify with food, clothing, the need of sleep. He looked upon his wife much as he did upon the weather. Both happened, and both for the most part were to be condemned. Still, he took no active measures for the abolishment of either.

He was a solemn man in his home, or at least for the most part a silent. Yet at times he became almost cheerful—when the talk fell upon himself; indeed, he would explain to his wife, with much care and elaboration, himself, his character, his virtues and his plans. In his household life he kept up the traditions in which he had been reared. He ate all the beefsteak there was on the table when there was but enough for one, which latter often was the case, for his wife had need to be frugal. At times he would purchase a solitary ticket to the theater and go alone. Yet he was generous, and always after his return home he would with fine feeling tell his wife what he had seen. Sometimes he spent a Sunday in the country, but, as he himself had been first to state, he was never selfish about this. He always would tell his wife how green the grass had been, how sweet the songs of the birds, how bright the sky. Most of all he would tell of the song of one small bird

which sang continually in his ear, telling him of a success which before long, in some way, was to be their own. The passing years left his wife a trifle thinner, a trifle more gray. He himself continued fresh, stalwart, strong. Sometimes, coming back from the theater or the country, after listening to the voice of this small bird at his ear, he would smite with a heavy fist upon the family table and say, "Why, Laura, look at me—look at me!" After which a heavy frown would come upon his face as of one conscious of tardiness in the fashion of fate. But he knew that he was a great man.

II

Now, what Laura, his wife, knew is not for us to say. She held her peace. Never a word of complaint, or taunt, or reproach, or of longing came to her lips. Never did she repine at the situation of life which held them for more than a dozen years after they were married—one of perpetual monotony, of narrow, iron-bound restraint. After some incredible, some miraculous way of womankind, she managed to make the ends meet, indeed even to overlap a trifle at each week-end. She smiled in the morning when he went away, smiled in the evening when he returned, and if meanwhile she did not smile again throughout all the day, at least she did her part. A great soul, this of Laura Rawn; but no greater than that of many another woman who does these things day after day until the time comes for the grave, wherein she lies down at last with equanimity and calm. Without unduly flattering the vanity, without overfeeding the egotism of her lord and master, at least Laura Rawn was wise enough to

see he could not be much changed. Finding herself thus situated, she accepted her case and spent her time doing what could be done, not wasting it in seeking the impossible. He was her husband, that was all. She knew no better way of life than to accept that fact and make the most of it. Which is tragedy, if you please.

III

After the birth of Grace Rawn, their daughter, which occurred within the first year of their wedded life, Laura Rawn had something to interest her for the remainder of their days. Her horizon widened now immeasurably; indeed to the extent of giving her a world of her own wherein she could dwell apart quite comfortably; one in which her husband had no part. Simple and just in her way of thought, she accepted the truth that without married life, without her husband, this new world could not have been her own. Wherefore she credited him, and in her child, somewhat revered him. She was an old-fashioned wife.

As to the child herself, she grew steadily and normally into young girlhood, in time into young womanhood, not given to much display, reserved of judgment as well as of speech, oftentimes sullen in mood, yet withal a step or so higher than her mother on the ladder of feminine charm. She had a clean, good family rearing, and a good grammar school education. At about the time her father came to be a man of middle age, Grace fell into her place in the clerical machine of the railway office where he worked; for very naturally, being an American girl of small means, she took up shorthand, and was licensed to do violence. At home

she joined her mother in regard and attention for the master of the house.

IV

Here, then, was simply a good, middle-class American family, offering for some years little to attract the attention of those who dwelt about them. The head of this family, as he attained additional solidity of figure, grew even heavier of brow, trod with even more stateliness about his appointed duties. It was a privilege for the other clerks who labored near him to see such calm, such dignity. On the street John Rawn asked no pardons if he brushed against his fellow-man. In his business life, in his conduct upon the street-car, at the restaurant table, anywhere, he helped himself as though of right, and regarded the rights or preferences of others not at all. The community cream, the individual butter, he accumulated unto himself unsmilingly, as once he had bananas in his youth. Broad hints, deprecating smiles, annoyed protests, all were lost upon him. At forty-seven years of age his salary was but one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month. That showed only the lack of wisdom of others, not unfitness in himself. Had this been Greece, or Rome, or mediæval England, he would have shown them who was entitled to the throne! Indeed, he would show them that yet. He often told his wife and daughter as much.

Did we not know the genesis of Mr. Rawn, and did we not know full well the divine right of kings, we might call this rather a curious frame of mind for a man who dwelt in a small house with green blinds and a dingy back yard, for whose conjoint charms he paid

but twenty dollars a month, on whose floors there was much efflorescence of art square, upon whose be-lambrequined mantels showed few works of art beyond a series of bisque shepherdesses and china dogs, on whose parlor table reclined a Dying Gaul, and on whose boudoir walls hung an engraving of the Rock of Ages. But John Rawn bided his time. He went on year after year, grave and dignified, perhaps one new cross wrinkle coming in his forehead with each Christmas, recorded by one more annual shepherdess upon the family mantel.

v

And yet all this time success was lying in ambush, as it sometimes does, ready to spring forth at the appointed hour. At about this time there occurred changes in the arrangement of the planets, the juxtaposition of the spheres, which meant great alteration in the affairs of John Rawn, of Kelly Row, who dwelt in a brick house six miles out from the railway office where he had worked for twenty-four years, and where he had risen in so brief a time all the way from forty to one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month.

Let us dwell upon the picture for a moment, deliriously. Could it be possible that this man in time would own a large part of this railway and of others? Was it possible to predict a day when an army of clerks and others, here or there, would stand ready to jump when Rawn cracked over them a whip whose handle well fitted in his hand? Could the time be predicted, dreamed, imagined, when the president of this road, the great Henry Warfield Standley, would spring to

open the door for John Rawn, twenty-four years a clerk, of whose existence he had not long known?

Yet all these things actually did occur. They could occur only in America; but this is America. They could occur only at the summons of a megalomaniac selfishness, an inordinate lust of power; but here were these, biding their time, in the seriously assured mind of an American man; a man after all born of his age and of his country, and representative of that country's typical ambition—the ambition for a material success.

The lust of power—that was it! The promise of power—that was what the small bird had sung in John Rawn's ear! The craving and coveting of power—that was what quivered in the marrow of his bones, that put ponderousness in his tread, that shone out of his eyes.

It was this, it was all of these, focused suddenly and unexpectedly by the lens of accident into a burning point of certainty, which marked the air and attitude of John Rawn one evening on his return to his home at the conclusion of his day's work. He almost stumbled as he entered the door, heedless of the threshold. He paced up and down the narrow little hall, trod here and there almost as in a trance, muttering to himself, before at last he stood in front of his wife and spread out his arms—not for her, but for the imaginary multitude whom he addressed in her.

"Laura," said he, "Laura, it's come! I've got the idea. It's going to win. We're going to be rich. I've believed it all along, and I know it now! Laura, look at me—didn't I always tell you so—didn't I know?"

He stood before her, his shoulders back, his chin up, his brow frowning, his lips trembling in simple, devout admiration of himself. It was not defiance that marked his attitude. John Rawn did not defy the lightning. He only wondered why the lightning had so long defied him.

CHAPTER VI

MR. RAWN ANNOUNCES HIS ARRIVAL

I

FOR some time Mrs. Rawn said nothing in answer to her husband's declaration. She had known such things before. Indeed, with woman's instinct for deliberate self-deception, she sometimes in spite of her own clear-sightedness had persuaded herself to feel a sort of resentment at the conditions which so long had held her husband back; had been sure, as so many wives are, that only a conspiracy of injustice had thwarted him of success. If only he could get his chance! That was the way she phrased it, as most wives do—and most husbands.

But to-day there was something so sincere in his air as to take her beyond her own forced insincerity with herself. She caught conviction from his tone. There fell this time upon the sensitized plate of her woman's nature some sort of shadow of events to come which left there a permanent imprint as of the truth.

"What is it, John?" she demanded. Her eye kindled, her voice had in it something not of forced or perfunctory interest. He caught these also, in his exalted mood almost as sensitive as herself.

"Then you believe it at last!" he demanded, almost fiercely. It was the voice of his father speaking, demanding of a sinner whether or not she had repented of her former fallen state. "You begin to think that after all I'll do something for us both? Oh, well, I'm glad—"

"Why, John, I always thought so," she chided mildly. "When did I ever—"

"Oh, I don't know that you ever said it in so many words," he grumbled, "but of course I knew how you felt about it. I suppose a woman can't help that. It was my part to succeed somehow, some time, in spite of you. I always knew I would."

He paced up and down, his coat tails back of the hands which he thrust deep into his pockets. "I'll tell you again, since I have never spoken of this—for fear you'd think me just a little conceited about myself"—he smiled in a manner of deprecation, never for an instant catching the comedy of this, more than she herself displayed proof of her own wish to smile—"I'll tell you anyhow, though you may think I've got a bit of vanity about myself. The truth is, I've always believed in myself, Laura! I've kept it hidden, of course—never let a soul know that I thought myself the least bit different from anybody else. *You* didn't know it, even—and you're my wife. I've been considered a modest man all my life. Yet, Laura, here's the truth about it—I *wasn't*, really! I *did* feel different from other men. I didn't feel just like an ordinary man. I *knew* I was not—and there's the truth about it. I don't know exactly how to tell you, but I've always known, as sure as anything, that some day I'd be a rich man."

II

She sat looking at him seriously, her elbows resting on the table, her gray eyes following him as he walked, his face serious, the imperious lock of hair now fallen across his forehead.

"Not that I would let money itself be the only thing, my dear, as you know," he went on nobly. "I wouldn't do that. Any man worth while has larger ambitions than merely making money. After I've made money enough, for us—more than you ever dreamed about—after I've succeeded and proved myself—then I'm going to do something for other men—my inferiors in life, you know—the laboring men. I suppose, after all, people are pretty much alike in some ways. Some men are stronger than others, more fit to succeed; but they ought to remember that after all they are the agents of Providence, that they are custodians, Laura, custodians. No man, Laura, no matter what his success, ought to be wholly selfish. He oughtn't to be—well, conceited about himself, you know. He ought to be *humble*."

She still looked after him, wondering whether, after all, he might not be a trifle off his head; but the seriousness of his eye daunted her.

"As for us, we'll move up to Chicago first, in all likelihood; maybe later to New York, for I suppose business will take us there a great deal of the time. As to where we'll make our home eventually, I hardly know. Sometimes I think we'll come back here and build a real house, just to show these people who we were all the time. Wherever we build, we'll furnish, too. I'm going to be a spender. Oh, I've *longed* for

it all my life—the feel of money going out between my fingers! Not all for ourselves, mind you. Maybe you don't quite understand about that—I couldn't expect you to. But after I've done something for the common people, I want to *build* something—churches, monuments, something that will stick and stay after you and I are gone, and tell them who John Rawn was. I want them to say, most of all, that he was a *modest* man, that he was a kind man, and not a selfish one—not a *selfish* man, Laura.”

III

She nodded, looking at him fixedly, large-natured enough to be just in the assembling of these crude and unformulated ambitions which she knew tormented him. “Yes, John,” she said quietly.

The next instant his mood changed.

“But one thing they'll have to do!” he said, smiting a fist into his palm. “They'll have to admit that I *was* John Rawn! They'll have to realize that success comes where it belongs. *My* brain, *my* energy, *my* point of view, *my* ability to command men, *my* instinct for leadership—they'll have to recognize all that. I'll make them see who we were all the time. Why, Laura, we've just been walking along a flat floor, more than twenty years, and now we're going to take the elevator. We'll go *up* now, straight and fast.

“I'm going to make you happy now,” he mused. “You've been a good enough wife. I always said that to myself—‘She's been a good wife.’ I'm going to show you that you didn't make any mistake that night when you took me, only a railway clerk, with a salary of forty a month.”

She did not remind him that, so far as she knew, he was still a railway clerk, with a salary which in twenty years had not grown abnormally. But now her own ambitions began to vault; first of all, the ambition of a mother for her child. She accepted all these vague statements as convincing truths; for where we hope we are easily convinced.

"But how soon, John? You see, there is Grace, our girl."

"She'll wear diamonds and real clothes."

"I wasn't thinking of that. I was thinking of her education. Grace ought to go to some good girls' college in the East. You see, you and I didn't have so very much education, John," she smiled.

He frowned in answer. "We didn't need so much, so far as that goes. Books are not everything. There's plenty of college men who don't amount to anything."

"I didn't so much mean books. But you see, John, we've lived rather carelessly. We've not been very conventional, we don't know very many people, and—maybe—we don't know much how things are *done*, you see. Now suppose we were giving a dinner, and you had to take out the guest of honor—"

"Nonsense! I reckon any guest'd feel honored enough to come to my house. I'm not worrying about that. Cash in the bank is the main thing for the guest of honor. As for the girl, she'll have as much education as we had, and that's enough."

"But I want her to be a lady, John."

"Can't she be?"

"I'll want her to marry well, John."

"Won't she? If she has money, can't she?"

"But I want her to be prized for herself, for what she is."

"She'll be our daughter, and won't that be enough?"

"But herself!"

"She's our girl. I don't see where she'd find better parents."

"I was just thinking—about her education—that a little finishing would help her. We wouldn't always live just as we are living now, and she ought to be prepared for better things. We read about things, but what do we know about them? Grace ought to know."

"I don't really join in your anxiety, Mrs. Rawn," said he largely, "but that'll all come, if it's needful."

"It's needful now. Grace'll be a young woman before long. You see—" she flushed painfully as she spoke—"I don't want to see her grow up awkward. I don't want her to feel as though she hadn't been used to things, you know—to be ashamed of herself and her—her parents. Not that I care so much for myself—"

There were tears in her eyes—tears of reaction, of hope however badly founded. She had toiled long and patiently.

"Why, what's the matter, Laura?" asked her husband.

"I'm getting to be almost old, John—I'm almost an old lady now! I've got gray hairs. I'm forty-five."

He shook her by the shoulders playfully. "Nonsense! We're almost of an age, and I'm just beginning life. Grace is only a child."

"She's eighteen past. That's why I asked you how soon—tell me, have they really raised your salary,

John? If we could only have two thousand dollars a year it would be all in the world I should ask."

"Salary!" he guffawed. "Two thousand dollars a year! Say that much a month, a week, a day!"

"You're crazy, John! What do you mean?" Indeed, some doubt of his sanity now began to enter her mind.

"Read in the papers about the daily incomes of those big chaps, those really great men back East, the fellows who run things. Every one of them made it out of nothing—not one of them had any one to give him a start. We've no right to say that I can't do as well as they have. The start's the thing."

"But what has happened, then? I never saw you so stirred up before in all my life, John."

"I never have been."

"But what is sure—what can I depend on for Grace?"

"Death, taxes, and a woman's curiosity are all the sure things. I don't know anything else that is sure. No man can give all the details of his life in advance."

"In advance?"

"Oh, it hasn't all actually happened yet, of course. I won't begin wheeling home a wheelbarrow full of gold every night for quite a while. But some day I may!" His lips closed grimly.

IV

"Grace'll be a young woman before long," his wife still mused, irrelevantly.

"Let that take care of itself. I'll deliver the goods."

She allowed herself a smile. "They are not delivered?"

He flushed at this. "You think they never will be? Very well, I'll fight it out alone. At least I believe in myself."

"But what's *happened*? What do you mean, after all?" She put her hand upon his arm as he passed. He flung himself into a chair opposite her, his own elbows on the table as he faced her.

"You can't understand it, Laura; but listen. There are two ways of getting rich. You can make money without brains in real estate, other people building you up rich. That's luck, not brains. A great many of the great fortunes—take Astor's, for instance, in New York—have been made in that way. But that's a fortune which you O. K. after it's made, and you don't know anything about it in advance—it's too far in the future. You don't hear of the ones that are not made. Astor used his best judgment and bought land up the island, where he thought people would go, but he didn't *know* they'd go there. That's as much luck as brains. We call luck brains when it makes good.

"But there's another way of getting rich. That means real *brains*, and not luck. It means deliberately figuring out what people are going to do. There is only so much room on the surface of the earth. But there's room in the air for millions and millions of basic ideas."

He gloomed across at her, but she kindled, as ready as ever to travel with his thought.

"Look at a few of the big ideas which have paid," he said. "Give the people something they haven't had; get them so they have to have it! Cinch it first, and

sell it afterward—and you're going to get rich. Granted an idea which takes hold on the daily life of the whole people, and there's no way of measuring the money you can make.

"For instance, you couldn't put the world back to the place where it could get along without refined oil, without steam and electric transportation, and the telephone, and a thousand other things which have made men rich—inventions which seemed little at first, but which were universal after a while. Oil, water, iron, wood, steel—we have to have those things. Cinch them and sell them. That's the way to get rich, my dear. Get an idea, get to it first, and cinch it for your own. Then sell it. Keep on selling it. Give 'em something they've got to have, after showing 'em they've got to have it. Teach 'em what they ought to have known without any teaching. Some men teach and others pay them for it. After that, all you've got to do is to take it away from them. When you've taken away enough, make 'em crawl—make 'em *admit* that you were greater than they were. Then build your monument and make them keep on remembering you. After that—"

"And after *that*, John?" she said gently.

v

He did not hear her. He sat staring, as though in the mirror of his own mind. At last he let his hand drop across the table. She dropped her own into his, timidly.

"Listen, Laura," he went on. "I'll tell you a little of what I mean."

"Yes, John, I'm sure you will."

"What's the distinguishing thing about life to-day, my dear—the thing that makes it different from that of the past?"

"Why, I don't know."

"A great many don't know. They don't stop to *think*! That's why so many pass by the open door of success and never get inside. Listen, Laura. Wait a minute—don't interrupt me. *Speed* is the thing to-day. Speed, speed, speed; and power! Don't you see it all around you, don't you feel it? Can't you almost smell it, touch it, taste it? It's on the street, in the house, in business, everywhere—we can't go fast enough. But we're going faster. We'll go twice as fast."

"How do you know? What do you mean? Who told you, John?"

"That's my business. That's my idea. That's my invention. That's how I'm going to get rich."

"Laura, I'm going to make it possible to gear up our national life, to double its present speed," he went on savagely.

"When they've got it, they'll think they always had it, and after that they all will always have to have it. I'll be there first. I'll cinch it, and I'll sell it. That's my idea. That's not luck. It's brains, brains, *brains*, Laura!"

VI

She leaned back in her chair, sighing. "Do you think I could have a silk dress, John?" she said at length, her mind overleaping vast intermediate details.

"My God, woman!"

"Could we go to the theaters—I've always wanted to so much. Could I go into the country once in a while, where things are green?"

He made a despairing gesture at her inability to grasp the future.

"We could travel—could we go over to Europe—could we take Grace there, John?"

"As often as you liked!"

"Could we have a new gate in the picket fence, if the landlord still refused?"

"Oh, my God!"

She sat, trying to rise to the pitch of such ambition, but succeeded only in remaining commonplace. "How did you come across it, John?" she asked after a little.

He smiled. "What did I say about death and taxes and a woman's curiosity? The truth is, I picked it up from a word or so I heard in a chance conversation—two young fellows from the engineering department were talking something over. That young chap named Halsey, just out of some college, full of fads, you know. He'd been reading something his old professor had been monkeying over. I got my idea then—the idea of making any automobile go twice as fast as it does, any railway train, anything else—of cutting out a lot of useless human labor, and setting the power of gravitation to work."

"I thought you said this was your *own* idea?"

"It *is* my own. What is thrown away deliberately, and picked up, is mine, if I see the value in it. Young Halsey didn't know. He's just a visionary—nothing practical about him. He couldn't see into this."

"Halsey—Charley Halsey of the offices? He's been

here—I think Grace—you see, the Personal Injury office, where she works, is just across the hall from the Engineering—”

“Well, it’s no difference. I’m going to take care of the affair myself. But it might be just as well if he came, once in a while. Grace might do worse.”

“But you heard him speak of it first?”

“I’ve just told you, yes, woman! But there was nothing worked out. I’ve got to furnish the time and money and brains and the plan of working it out. I’ve never said a word to him yet, of course, and I don’t want you to say a word.”

Her face fell. “I’m afraid I can’t understand all these things, John. But I should think you’d take Charley in as a partner. That is, if Grace— Maybe he could help.”

“A partner? With me? Laura, John Rawn has no partners.”

VII

She rose after a time, her eyes not seeking his.

“Grace will be coming home directly,” she said briskly. “I must get supper ready.”

“One thing”—he raised a restraining hand—“keep quiet about this. I’ve told you too much already.”

For half an instant Laura Rawn almost wondered whether this thing might not be true. Such things had happened in this country. Was there not daily proof before her eyes? And might not fortune reverse her wheel for them also; might not lightning choose, as sometimes elsewhere it had chosen, a humble and

unimportant spot for its alighting? Who can read the plans of the immortal gods? asked the pagans of old. Who, asked Laura Rawn, devout Christian, can foresee the plans of a Divine Providence?

As for John Rawn, he troubled but little over the immortal gods or over a Divine Providence, feeling small need of the aid of either. He had himself.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN

I

THUS far, the Rawn planet had moved but in restricted orbit, to wit: one bounded as to one extremity by the dingy yard and narrow walls of a home rented at twenty dollars a month; at the other, by the still dingier and more prosaic business surroundings of a railway's general offices. Narrow and dull enough the Rawn life had been, and in such a life, lived on into middle age, you scarce could have blamed a man had he settled back for ever into the grip of the upreaching fingers of monotony. The half mechanical and parrot-like repetition of set phrases in a restricted line of business correspondence for Rawn himself, day after day; the dull and endless round of homekeeping duties for the wife—what but narrowness and dullness could come out of life such as this? Wherefore you should not have been surprised had you been told that Grace Rawn was simply the outgrowth of this sort of home, this sort of life, not much different from other girls of her class.

We are coming more and more in America to use that word "class." The theory is that we came to this continent to escape class; but surely class has followed

us, and restricted us, and counted us out into elect and damned, into those above and those below the salt. Rather let us say the truth, which is that class has followed us because we ourselves have followed after class.

But continually the great laws of survival go on after their own fashion. In the production of human beings there continually are at work the five laws of evolution, the five factors of heredity, environment and selection, blended with variation and isolation. These five factors build human characters, continue ever to do their amazing sums in life and success and survival. Sometimes they produce a Grace Rawn.

II

Perhaps it was the very factor of isolation that gave Grace Rawn her quality. She was a silent girl, somewhat reserved. Silence and reserve she got from her father's solemn self-absorption, her mother's quiet self-abnegation. She was softened in part by the gentle training of her mother, who talked most when her husband was not present.

Grace Rawn stood two inches taller than her mother, and had a certain severe distinction which covered many sins in shorthand. Her brows were dark and met above her eyes; and the latter, being somewhat myopic, usually were covered by glasses—which also not infrequently shield yet other multitudes of sins in stenography. Her chin was well out and forward. Her jaw was rounded, her teeth white and good, her carriage also good, if still a trifle stiff and awkward. In air she was slow and deliberate. Her eyes were gray like her

mother's, her voice deep like her father's. She was what would be called old for her years, indeed a woman at sixteen. Most would have placed her age some years further on than the eighteen years which really were hers at this time.

Grace Rawn could not be said to have any circle of friends. Her soul was eclectic. In short, isolation, selection and variation, the three less known laws of growth, had done as much for her as the more vaunted factors of heredity and environment. Self-contained, adequate enough in appearance, although lacking that sort of magnetism which draws men to women, she would have passed with small notice in the average collection of her sex. For such as these, propinquity comes as a blessing in so far as natural selection is concerned.

III

In St. Louis, natural selection operated much as in the Silurian or the Elizabethan, or eke the Jeffersonian age, choice being made from that which offered at the family doorstep in either era. In Kelly Row good folk sat upon the doorstep of an eventide. The evening assemblage upon the Rawn front doorstep in Kelly Row grew larger as Grace grew older. Certain young men came. Why did they come? Why do we walk about and around a tree that hangs full in fruit not yet ripened, watching the bloom on this, the texture of that, the size or probable flavor of yonder example hanging as yet unfinished in the alchemy of the summer sun? At least the little company at times was larger on the Rawn front stoop of an evening. It all went on in the easy, careless, hopeful, unconventional

fashion of families of the Rawn class. Let it be remembered that class really is class in this country. There seemed little hope for Grace, therefore, other than in a marriage after the stereotyped fashion of Kelly Row. Perhaps if good fortune attended, she might marry a man who, at middle age, might, like her father, be drawing a salary of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month; a great man in the eyes of the world of Kelly Row, which lived on an average of half that per month.

IV

In this evening company, as Laura Rawn had mentioned, occasionally might have been found one Charles Halsey, himself now some twenty-four years of age at next spring's lambing-time; as his father, a Missouri farmer, would have said. Halsey had come to the city, a serious-minded youth, to seek his fortune, just as John Rawn had done at about the time Halsey himself was born. But whereas Rawn had concerned himself little in books, Halsey had, by such means as only himself could have told, managed a degree in engineering in what New England calls a freshwater college, the same not so good as salt, yet, in Halsey's belief better than none and cheaper than some. Once out of college and finding himself belated, he had thrust into the thick of the fray of the business world to the best of his ability, though to his surprise not setting the world into any conflagration. These four years now, as chance had had it, he had been engaged in the drafting department of the engineer's offices in the same railway which employed John Rawn. A thoughtful young chap enough, and one held rather student than good

fellow by his fellow clerks, because for the most part he did not join them in their dissipations, their cheap joys, their narrow ways of thinking. Also a chap regarded as not wholly desirable because he read much, and because he had ideas.

Charles Halsey, as well as Grace Rawn, in some sort seemed to set the laws of heredity and environment at defiance in favor of the lesser factors in evolution. He had originally no right to be anything but a farm lad, yet he had dreams, and so had fought his way through college. There, in the world of books, close to the world of thought, not far from the world of art, he had become what some of us might have called an idealist, what most of us would have called a fool, and now what all of us would have called a failure.

A studious bent, a wide and unregulated way of reading, a vague, inexact and untrained habit of mentality, took young Halsey, as it does many another unformed mind, into studies of social problems for which he was but little fitted, to wit: into imaginings about human democracy, the inherent rights of man, and much other like folly. The questions of socialism, the rights and wrongs of capital, the initiative, the referendum and the recall; the direct primary, the open shop, and the living wage scale under the American standard—all these and many other things occupied him as much as tangents, curves and logarithms. As a result of his inchoate research, he started out in young manhood well seized of the belief—finely expressed in a certain immortal but wholly ignored document known in our own history—that there is a certain evenness in human nature before the eyes of the Lord.

A young engineer with small salary, and a theoretic-

cal cast of mind, even though he reads text-books out of hours, has only himself to trust for his upward climb in life. Surely he might be better occupied in wondering rather about his pull with the boss than about the eyes of the Lord as bearing upon the future of this republic. But, at any rate, such was the plight of young Mr. Halsey. And, such being the nature and disposition of the doorstep-frequenting young, it chanced that, although Grace Rawn really was not yet fledged beyond the blue-tip stage of her final feathering, and although Mr. Halsey of the Engineering, draftsman, himself still lacked the main quills which support a man in his ultimate flight through life, they came more and more to meet each other; after which, each in separate fashion came to enjoy the meeting and to look forward to the next.

It was not unusual for Mr. Halsey, faring homeward from the office, to meet Grace, also faring home, at the turn of the car track on Olive Street. Taking the same car they would travel, somewhat shy and silent, until they reached the distant corner where those bound for Kelly Row must leave the car. Then, himself obliged by this to walk perhaps a mile farther, he would join her, still shy and more or less silent; and so perhaps again wander to that certain door in Kelly Row where by that time, perhaps, both Mr. Rawn and his helpmeet were sitting on the narrow porch. He was always welcome there, because Rawn knew him for a steady chap; and because, in Halsey's eyes, John Rawn was considerable of a personage. Rawn was always ready to be consulted by the young, and, like most failures, was not averse to giving abundant good advice to others as to the problems of success. Halsey,

reserved and not expansive of nature, a poor boy in college, always had had a social world as narrow as this of Kelly Row; so that after all the parties of both the first and the second part were traveling mostly in their own class. On the whole it was rather a dour assemblage, that on the porch in Kelly Row. None seemed to have any definite plan or to suspect another of plan. Life simply was running on, in the bisque shepherdess, china dog, Dying Gaul and Rock of Ages way.

v

Let us except John Rawn. He now had certain wide plans of his own, as we shall see—indeed, as we have seen—and these had somewhat to do with young Mr. Halsey himself.

Mr. Halsey himself was disposed at times rather to moroseness, not yet having discovered the full relation of liver and soul—a delicate and intimate association. Sometimes despair oppressed him.

“Once in a while I get an idea,” said he, one evening, “and I think it might make good if I had a chance to put it over. But what’s the use? I couldn’t do anything with the best idea in the world, because I have no time nor money to work one out. I tell you, you’ve got to have money or pull to get anywhere to-day. This country’s getting into a bad way. It doesn’t look quite right to me, I tell you, the way human beings are ground under to-day.”

And yet it was out of precisely such talk as this that John Rawn originally got the reason for the enthusiastic conversation with his wife which earlier has been

chronicled. Behold the difference among men! Here was one who wanted to set all the world right, to discover some panacea by which all men might rest in happiness for ever, by which all men might succeed, might indeed prove themselves free and equal, and entitled to, say, ten minutes out of the twenty-four hours for the pursuit of happiness—innocent happiness, such as reading books on electricity, socialism, the steaming quality of coke, or the tortional strength of I-beams laid in concrete. Here also, one lift above him on the doorstep of Kelly Row, was another man, John Rawn, who, thinking he was full of ideas, had none, but who had every confidence in himself; a man who early in his youth had proved his ability to leave to others the skin of their bananas while he himself took the meat, and paid naught therefor. Not much of a stage, thus set in Kelly Row. But this is the stage as it was set.

VI

Among these, there was one idea waiting to be born. For, look you, the air is full of ideas—even as John Rawn in ignorant truthfulness had said. They float all about us, unborn children in the ether of the universe, waiting to be born, selecting this or that of us—you, me, gently, for a parent; the most of them to be pushed back unknown, unrecognized, into the frustrate void, and so left to await a better time. I doubt not that, at this time or that, each of us has had offered to him, thus gently, thus unknown, some idea which would have made any of us great, set us far above our fellow-man; ideas which for all of that,

perhaps would have revolutionized the world. But we did not know them. What great things are left unborn, what great discoveries remain unmade, no man may measure. We do not lay hold upon that thin and vaporous hand which touches our shoulder. We do not wrestle unwearied with the angel unto the coming of the dawn. So we go on, bruised and broken, and at length buried and forgot, most of us never grasping these unseen things, not even having a hint of their immaterial presences. It is only as the jest-loving fates have it that, once in a while, something in revolutionary thought drops to earth, is caught by some materialistic mind, bred up by some materialistic hand.

It must have been first at some chance meeting here on the doorstep in Kelly Row that young Halsey let drop reference to an idea. It was the whisper of some passing wing in the universal ether, but he did not know that. It is not always the mind of the idealist which produces. But now this thin, faint, mystic sound had fallen upon the material mind of John Rawn, covetous, eager, receptive of any hint to further his own interest, concerned not in the least with science, not in the least with altruism, troubling not in the least over the fate of this republic or the welfare of mankind, concerned only with his own fate, interested only in his own welfare. Whereupon John Rawn—barring that certain prophetic outburst of his egotism with which he favored his wife but recently—in silence had accepted this sign and taken it as his own, devised for his use and behoof, and for that of none other than himself.

VII

This difference, then, lay between Rawn of the Personal Injury department of the railway office, and Halsey of the drafting offices; Rawn believed in himself, Halsey had not yet figured out whether or not he believed in anything. They met on the doorstep at Kelly Row, and out of their meeting many things began in Kelly Row which matured swiftly elsewhere, and in surprising fashion.

We now come on, sufficiently swiftly, to the history of the birth and organization of the International Power Company, Limited; a concern which grew out of nothing except the five factors of survival—environment, heredity, variation, selection and isolation. Its cradle was in Kelly Row.

CHAPTER VIII

POWER

I

"CHARLES," said John Rawn one evening, with that directness of habit which perhaps we have earlier noted, "I have been thinking over some scientific problems."

"Yes?" replied Halsey. "What is it—a patent car coupler? There isn't a fellow in our office who hasn't patented one, but I didn't know it was quite so catching as to get into the Personal Injury department—they only settle with the widows there."

"In my belief," went on Rawn, frowning at this flippancy, "I am upon the eve of a great success, Charles."

"What sort of success, Mr. Rawn?" inquired Halsey, more soberly.

Rawn smiled largely. "You will hardly credit me when I tell you, almost all sorts of success! To make it short, I have formed a power company—a concern for the cheap generation and general transmission of power. In the course of a few months we'll proceed in the manufacture of electrical transmitters and receivers for what I call the lost current of electricity."

Halsey stood cold for a moment, and looked at him in amazement.

"You don't mean to say—why, that's precisely what *I've* been thinking of for so long."

"I don't doubt many have been thinking of it," rejoined Rawn. "It had to come. These things seem to happen in cycles. It's almost a toss-up what man will first perfect an invention when once it gets in the air, so to speak. Now, this invention of mine has been due ever since the developments in wireless transmission. In truth, I may say that I have only gone a little beyond the wireless idea. What I have done is to separate the two currents of electricity."

Halsey leaned against the wall. "My God!" he half whispered. He smiled foolishly.

"Why, Mr. Rawn," he said finally, "I've been studying that, I don't know how long—ever since the researches in my university were made public. I thought for some time I might be able to figure it out further than our professors have as yet. Pflüger, of Bonn, in Germany, has been working for years and years on that theory of perpetual motion in all molecules."

"Mollycules? I don't know as I ever really saw any," hesitated Rawn.

"Very likely, Mr. Rawn!"

"I've never cared much for mere scientific rot," said Rawn, coloring a trifle. "That gets us nothing. But what were you saying?"

Halsey's enthusiasm carried him beyond resentment and amusement alike.

"Molecules are everywhere, in everything, Mr. Rawn," he explained gently; "and now we know they *move*, though we can see them only in mass and as though motionless."

"I don't see how that can be," began Rawn; but checked himself.

Halsey smote his hand against the solid wall. "It moves!" he exclaimed. "It's alive! It vibrates—every solid is in perpetual motion. The dance of the molecules is endless. It's in the air around us, above us—power, power—immeasurable, irresistible power, exhaustless, costless *power*! All you have to do is to jar it out of balance."

"Yes, I know. That's what I've been getting at, precisely—"

"I was going to figure it out sometime," said Halsey ruefully.

"I *did* figure it out!" said John Rawn sententiously. "Moreover, I've got the company formed."

II

"*You*—Mr. Rawn? How did you manage that? I didn't know that you—" Halsey at last spoke.

"A great many haven't known about a great many things," said Rawn, walking up and down, his hands in his pockets, his air gloomily dignified. "A few men always have to do the things which others don't know about. For instance, what did all the work of your professors—what-d'ye-call-'ems—amount to? Nothing at all. Maybe they'd print a paper about it. That would about end it, just as it ended it for you. You admit you got the idea from them; but I say it wasn't any idea at all. I saw it—in the papers. Didn't pay much attention to it, because there's nothing in this scientific business for practical men like me."

"I know, I know," Halsey nodded. "That's true.

Here it all is." He took from his coat pocket a creased and folded newspaper page of recent date. "Here's the story—I was proud, because it was my own university did the work:

"That the molecules composing all material substances are constantly in rapid motion, ricocheting against one another in the manner of a collection of billiard-balls suddenly stirred up, the speed of the air's components being about half that of a cannon ball, was the proof announced to-day from the University of Chicago as a further development of the experiments by Professor R. A. Threlkeld, which for the last year have been attracting the attention of scientists from all parts of the world. The absolute nature of the proof, upon which physicists all over the world have been working without result for several years, was assented to by Professor Pflüger, of Bonn University, Germany, who arrived in Chicago last Monday to witness the demonstration.'"

He paused in his literal reading from the printed page. "I told you about Pflüger," he began.

"Yes, some Dutchman," assented Rawn graciously. "They're great to dig."

Halsey, being in the presence of the man whom he proposed making his father-in-law, was perforce polite, although indignant. He went on icily, with his reading, since he had begun it:

"The belief that the molecules of which all matter is composed are in a perpetual dance of motion has been held tentatively by scientists for several years, but, owing to the general inability to make any progress in proving it, considerable skepticism has developed among the physicists of several of the leading

scientific nations. It was generally known as the kinetic theory. Professor Threlkeld's proof is a further development of his experiments, showing electricity to be a definite substance, which were announced last year and were pronounced the most important discovery concerning the nature of electricity since Benjamin Franklin.

"The simple expedient of performing his experiments in almost a complete vacuum—a method which had not occurred to scientists before—was given by Professor Threlkeld as the foundation stone of his discovery. Minute drops of oil, sprayed into a vacuum chamber, one side of which is of glass, demonstrate by their own motions the truth of the theory.

"Surrounded by the ordinary amount of air, the oil drops are bombarded by moving air molecules in so many thousand places at once that their motion is so rapid as to be invisible. With few molecules of air surrounding them, the drops are driven back and forth as though being used as a punching-bag.

"By reference to his previous experiments with drops of oil bombarded by electrical ions, the motion of the oil drops has been found to be precisely the same, showing the cause of the motion to be similar in both cases."

"That's all right," said John Rawn, "all very well as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough."

III

Halsey smiled. "Well, here's what the discoverer says about it," he commented. "I reckon that's plain, too, as far as it goes:

“For the benefit of the general public, Professor Threlkeld has prepared the following statement concerning the experiments he has been conducting:

““The method consisted in catching atmospheric ions upon minute oil drops floating in the air and measuring the electrical charge which the drops thus acquired. This year the following extensions of this work have been made:

““The action of ionization itself is now being studied, each of the two electrical fragments into which a neutral molecule breaks up being caught upon oil drops at the instant of formation. This study has shown that the act of ionization of a neutral air molecule always consists in the detachment from it of one single elementary charge rather than of two or three such charges.

““By suspending these minute oil drops in rarefied gases instead of in air at atmospheric pressure, the authors have been able to make the oil drops partake of the motions of agitation of the molecules to such an extent that they can be seen by any observer to dance violently under the bombardment which they receive from the flying air molecules.

““By measuring accurately the amount of the motion of agitation of the oil drops and comparing it with the motions which they assume under the influence of an electrical field because of the charge which they carry, the authors have been able to make an exact and certain identification, with the aid of computations made by Mr. Fletcher, of the electrical charge carried by an atmospheric ion (and measured in their preceding work), with the electrical charge carried by univalent ions in solution.

““This work not only supplies complete proof of the correctness of the atomic theory of electricity, but gives a much more satisfactory demonstration than had before been found of the perpetual dance of the molecules of matter.” ’ ’* ”

IV

“Fine! Fine! Charley!” interrupted Rawn sardonically. “Everybody’s read that who cared to read it. It’s too dry for most folks. It’s public; it’s wide open, no secret about it. But who wants it? What use has a mollycule and a drop of oil in a glass jar got in actual business? What ice does it cut?”

“I know—I know, Mr. Rawn; very little indeed. But, one idea grows out of another. Now, what I was experimenting with was this same second current of electricity—whatever it is. It’s got something to do—I don’t just know what—with this same movement of the molecules. Now, can’t you see, *something* has got to move them. If you’ve got perpetual motion, you’ve got a perpetual power somewhere back of it; and a power that is endless, universal—

“Mr. Rawn,” he resumed earnestly, “when I got that far along, I got to—well—sort of dreaming! I followed that dance of the atoms on out—into the universe—into the manifestation of—”

“Well, of what?”

“Of God! Of Providence! Of Something, whatever it is that begins and perpetuates; *something that plans!* Something that created. Something that in-

* With but a change of name, Mr. Halsey quoted literally from the journal—*The Author*.

tends life and comfort and joy for the things It created."

v

Rawn eyed him coldly. "Charley," said he, "you're talking tommyrot! You can't run this world into the spiritual world. That's wrong. It's irreligious. Besides, it's rot."

Halsey hardly heard him. "So then I began to wonder what we'd find yet, when we had that vast, universal power all for our own—all for man, you know, Mr. Rawn. Living's hard to-day, Mr. Rawn. There's a lot of injustice in the world nowadays. So—well, I wondered if it weren't nearly time that things should change. We've always moved on up—or thought we did, anyhow—so why shouldn't we keep on moving, keep on making discoveries?"

"That's what *I* thought, Charley!"

—"Something that would lighten the world's labor, and give the world more time to think, more time to *grow*—to enjoy—well, to *love*, you know—"

"Charley, you're nothing better than a damned Socialist! You're siding with the lower classes. Labor!—There's always got to be labor, long as the world lasts—always has been and always will be. And some do that sort of work, while others don't. There are differences among men. Look at those professors—look at you! A mollycule in a glass jar—what'd it get you? Did any of you form a company for the perpetual sale of something that's everlasting and that don't cost anything? You didn't. But *I* did."

"Yes. And it was my dream—but not as you state it, Mr. Rawn. I didn't want to sell it. I wanted to

give it. I wanted to do something for the people, for humanity—for the country—you see. That is—”

“Humanity be damned!” broke in John Rawn brutally. “You *can’t* do anything for humanity—you *can’t* make the weak men strong—it’s God A’mighty does that, Charley. *Give* it away, eh? Well, let me have the second current that costs nothing, and let me sell it for ever at my own price—and I reckon I’ll let you and your professor and Mr. Dutchman, whatever his name is, trail along any way you like with your mollycule in the glass jar. I want canned *power*—definite, marketable, something you can wrap up in a package and *sell*, do you understand—*sell* to those same laboring men that you’re wasting your sympathy on. Work for *yourself*, my son, remember that; never mind about humanity. And I’ll give you a chance, Charley—in my company,” he added.

VI

“Is it a big company?” queried Halsey wearily.

“Twenty-five million dollars,” answered John Rawn calmly. And it is to be remembered that at this time John Rawn was drawing a salary of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month, the highest pay he had ever received in all his life; also that he was at this time a man forty-seven years of age. We have classes in America, but occasionally the lines that separate one from the other prove susceptible of successful attack at the hands of a determined man. As Rawn stood before Halsey, who only goggled and gasped at such statements as his last, he seemed a determined man.

"We are going to dam the Mississippi River, a couple of hundred miles above here at the ledges," Rawn remarked casually. "For the time, that will be our central power plant. We will contract for a million and a half dollars' worth of power each year in St. Louis alone. That comes down by regular wire transmission. That is nothing, it's only a drop in the bucket. Our big killing is going to be with the other scheme—the second current—the same idea you've been trifling with. We'll go East with that."

"You seem to mean almost what I mean, when I talked with you long ago—"

"Do you think so?" Rawn's tone was affable and he held out his hand. "I should be happy indeed to think that we had been studying along the same lines, Charles. That will enable you all the better to understand my own ideas and my business plans. Of course—and I'll be frank with you, Charles—Mrs. Rawn and I have doubted the wisdom of Grace's engagement to a young man without means or prospects. But I can give you prospects, and you can make your own means. I'll put you in our central factory. We need good men, of course, and I need you especially, Charles. In fact, I've had you in my eye."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, I shall be president of the concern."

Halsey smiled sardonically. "The difference between men!"

"Pardon me, but you seem to think that you ought to stand in my shoes in this matter, Charles. I don't recall any warrant for that." Rawn spoke with asperity, aggrieved. "Of course, we speak loosely of certain things, all of us, and all of us have unformed

wishes, all that sort of thing. I'm willing to admit, too, as I said before, that when the time comes for a great idea to be discovered, it may be almost by accident that it is discovered by this man or that.

"But now, as I take it, Charles," he continued, "you never had any definite and exact idea of handling the unattuned current of electricity which runs free in the air, and which—according to my theory—can be taken down by the proper receivers and used locally—harnessed, set to work; and retailed at a price. That's the wireless idea, of course, in one form. It's the one big thing left for big business to discover. There's nothing left in timber, mines, irrigation, railroads; cream's all off the country now. But now here comes this idea of mine, and it's bigger than any of those old ones. *Money?*" He threw out his hands. "Were you working on this yourself, my son?" he concluded. "How singular! But it's in the air."

"Not very much," said Halsey honestly. "I didn't have time to work steadily at it. We're pretty busy in the office. I did make a little model, though. I spent quite a lot of time on it, as I could."

"We are busy in our office, too," said Rawn grimly. "But *I* found time. We'll look over your model together, some day."

CHAPTER IX

CHANGE IN KELLY ROW

I

UNLESS the Day of Judgment shall, in its extraordinary phenomena, accomplish that result, it is scarcely to be held probable that any cataclysm inaugurated by God or man ever will essentially disturb the placid business of simply being alive. Vesuvius erupts; a few human ants are scorched. A city burns, and a few ant-hills perish. An earthquake rocks half a continent; the other half stands firm. Nothing much matters, and nothing happens. That men fly in the air, that men talk across seas by machines—as right presently they will talk mind to mind, free of all mechanical hindrance—attracts no attention beyond passing chronicle in the argot of the day. The large things of the age, of course, are the ball games and the encounters of the prize ring. Why should we think? Why should we feel apprehension, whereas we know full well that, come what may—unless that shall be, to wit: the ball game, the prize fight, or the Day of Judgment—nothing really can much matter, and nothing much can happen?

Nothing much happened in Kelly Row. The old monotony of business and domestic routine went on

with no alteration. Grace went with her father daily to the common and accustomed scene of their labors; Mrs. Rawn baked bread, roasted meat when meat could be afforded—for this was in the America of to-day—swept the hall carpet and dusted off the Dying Gaul; while as to Charles Halsey, he still read late at night and made none too good use of India ink, try-square and straight-edge by day. No great disturbance was to be noted anywhere. All that was proposed was that the people should be—with a very commendable benevolence—offered the opportunity of purchasing for ever, to the behoof of a very few, something that had been given them free and for ever by the will of God. A simple thing, this, and of no consequence. It ranked not even with an earthquake; certainly not with a ball game.

II

Yet, with sufficient steadiness, the plans for all this went forward, and that with a commendable celerity also; for John Rawn now proved himself no idler in a matter where his own welfare was concerned. He and Halsey very often, in their daily meetings, discussed their future plans; Halsey none too happily. Rawn consoled him.

“Never mind about it, Charles. You shall be my right-hand man. You’ll be able to understand my plans more perfectly than anybody else. And listen, Charles—” he laid a hand on the young man’s shoulder, “I’m not going to stand in the way of your own plans. You and Grace shall marry as soon as you like, after we get this thing going. It won’t be long. I shall have abundant means.”

"How ever *did* you do it?" demanded the young man, even as his face lightened at what seemed to him the most desirable news in the world. He had just gained Grace's consent and her mother's, but dreaded to ask that of her sterner parent. "How in the world did you manage it, Mr. Rawn? You hadn't any money, and you hadn't any influence."

"I did it by force of conviction," answered John Rawn severely, setting his knuckles on the table and leaning forward as he faced him. "I did it by my own original thoughts. I impressed these other men with the importance of my invention."

III

He strode up and down now, as he went on: "I'll tell you, Charles, so that you can understand these things. I suppose you do a certain amount of reading on current events. You must know, as we all do, what a keen search there has been made by capitalists all over the country for water power sites? There are few who know to what extent the greater power sites have been monopolized already—that's kept quiet, and the people don't care. Oh, I admire them, those leaders—those men who see into the future—those men who are our kings in industry. It's *there* I've wanted to stand all my life—among them, in their company, shoulder to shoulder with them, even-up with them—or better.

"Of course, you know the newspapers and the magazines—all of them managed by a lot of reformers who have no weight in the world of affairs—have done all they could to thwart the plans of these brainier

men. But they can't stop what's going to happen. A few men are going to control the resources of this country. A few men are going to administer the business affairs of this country. It can't be stopped. Even the Supreme Court realizes that now. Congress learned it long ago—the Senate proves it every day of the week. My son, this invention of mine is going to make that likelihood a certainty, a certainty! I want my place among those men, those few leaders who are to control this country. And I'm going to have it!"

Young Halsey, dull white, simply sat staring at him as he went on.

"We all know what the old ideas of fuel and power are—they're obsolete. Electricity is the power of the future, the power of to-day. *Speed, speed, speed* is what we want. *Power, power, power* is what every industry needs, as well as what every man craves.

"Now, heretofore, the only question has been to get electricity over the country, to distribute it cheaply. The water powers manufacture it well enough, but even water powers cost money; and there has always been a limit to the range of transmission. Now, when I set aside all these old, costly, inefficient methods, and hand, ready-made, to the great capitalists of this country the very answer to the last question they have been asking, what is going to be the natural result? When I tell them that I can wipe out all this enormous industrial waste that has been going on in power, what are they going to say to me? Are they going to kick me out of their offices?

"They didn't kick me out. When I went to them—a few of them, men who run our road—and told them that I could separate electricity into two parts, two

sorts, common and preferred, old and new, costly and cheap, localized and wholly mobile—what were they going to say to me? They didn't kick *me* out of the office! They got up and locked the office door. That's what they did. They were afraid I'd get away from them!

"They had thought of these things before—about as much as you have, I reckon. That is, they had *hoped* something would be discovered some time, by somebody. But I told them that I could send one-half of this divided power up into the air, now! I said I could store it in the air without cost to any one, and then take it down, at any manufacturing plant, anywhere, any lighting plant, any enterprise using power, whenever and wherever I pleased, at a cost not worth mentioning—and now! It was then they locked the office door, for fear I'd get away."

IV

"It's wonderful," said Halsey, warmly as he could.

"I told them that, as certainly as anything is certain, I could take that stored charge out of the air, and set it at work in Chicago, or Cleveland, or Pittsburgh, or Minneapolis, or where I liked. I said I could put in the scrap heap every factory run under the old and obsolete power methods. Then they began to sit up. I had 'em pale before I got through! I tell you, Charles, I saw the president of this railroad we have been working for look pale and sick when I, I, John Rawn, one of his underpaid clerks—a man who had had enough trouble to get to see him—who

had to make some excuse to get to see him—stood up right to his face and proved these things.”

Halsey, duller white, listened on as Rawn talked on.

“Of course, they didn’t believe it—he called in his crony, the general traffic manager—that beast Ackerman—you see, they have some side lines of investment together, on their personal account—and it makes ’em a lot more than their salaries. But they were afraid *not* to believe what I said. They tried to talk and couldn’t. About all they could say to me at the end of an hour or so was ‘How much?’

“Then I *told* them how much,” concluded John Rawn.

“How much was it, then?” Halsey tried to smile, palely.

“That is not for me to say. Business men handling large matters are pledged to mutual secrecy. The president of this railroad left for New York yesterday. I’m taking chances in telling you this much, and promising you as much as I have. I would not do it if I did not regard you as one of my own family. You must keep close in this, or else—” A savage look came into Rawn’s face, which he himself would scarcely have recognized, a new trait in his nature, kept back all these years; the savagery of the stronger having a weaker being in its power.

“Breathe a word of this, even to Grace,” he said, “and it’ll cost you Grace, and it’ll cost you more than that.”

v

Halsey made no answer but to sit looking at him, his eyes slightly distended. He loved this girl. If

he must pay for that love, very well. Love was worth all a man could have, all a man could do. He loved a girl, and he was young. Any price for her seemed small.

Rawn allowed his last remark to sink in before he resumed:

"It was some time ago that I went to these men. They sent for me often enough after that—"

"And could you prove it out?—"

"Wait a minute—don't interrupt me when I'm speaking." Rawn raised an imperious hand. "They sent for me, yes; until at length the president told me they hadn't known they had had this big and brainy a man right at their elbows all the time.

"Then," he went on blandly, unctuously, "they showed me how large-minded and generous great business men can be when you come to know them. The people don't know these great business men—why, they're just as simple, and human, and kind! They said they wanted to identify me with their own fortunes. For instance, they put me in for five thousand shares of stock in a rubber company they are floating, and some automobile stock. The automobile industry is sure to grow. That rubber stock alone would make me rich, I have no doubt."

"But what have you *done*?—"

"Wait a minute! These men, it seems, are in with a lot of other railroad men who are developing an oil field in lower California. They have been waiting till things got ripe. They've got two or three gushers capped out there that they're holding back until they get ready. They'll make millions out of that alone. These men play in with Standard Oil, and you know

how strong their hold is since the Supreme Court threw down the cards. A salary! *I* a salary—what did I make? They have *their* salaries, but what do such sums count with men of real genius in affairs?

"Well, they put me in for some of those oil shares, too. That alone would make me rich. I could stop right here, taking no chance, and be *rich*, now, to-day. It pays to trail in with the right bunch. What can the muckrakers do toward stopping men like that?

"I'm telling you things which of course I ought not to, but I know I can trust you, Charles. And, as I told you, I'm going to keep you about me in the business. I believe in you, my son. We'll have plenty of work to do together."

"Have you laid before them a complete plan, then, Mr. Rawn—how did you figure it all out so soon? I've worked on this a bit, and I never got much beyond a model that didn't quite turn the trick."

"I would hardly be foolish," smiled John Rawn. "They do not have my secrets. Let them complete their own plans. Let them raise their money. Let them form their company. Let them give me legally my fifty-one shares of International Power for control—then I'll tell them, not before. It's a question whether they're big enough to stack up in my class, that's all."

"Why, you're like the Keeley motor man!" grinned young Halsey. "It lasted—for a while. But can you keep on putting this over with these people?"

"The president of this railroad started for New York yesterday, I told you! We've not been idle. Two months ago we told our Senators in Congress what we wanted in the way of laws in the matter of our

great central power dam. Work is going on in the state legislatures, both sides of the river. Money? There's no trouble raising money in America when you have a valid idea—no, not if it's only one-tenth as good as this. And this is the best and biggest monopoly this country ever saw. They'll *pay* for an idea like this!"

VI

"It's an idea that'll rivet chains on this country!" broke out Halsey suddenly, starting up. "It's an idea that'll make still worse slaves of this American people!"

"Yet just a while ago," said Rawn, with a fine air of Christian fortitude, "you said that you were trying to get hold of this very same idea."

"Yes, yes, I was! I am! I did! But I wanted to take a burden off from the shoulders of the world, not to put a greater there. I wanted to lessen the dread and despair that our people feel to-day. I wanted to work it out, I say, so that every man could have the benefit—and *free!*"

"Every man *is* going to have it," remarked John Rawn grimly, "but *not* free. What did I tell you a while ago? Get an idea, cinch it—and then sell it! The people can have this benefit, yes; but they'll *pay* for it. That's the way success is made."

"Ah, is it so?" was Halsey's answer. He flung himself against the table, his pale face thrust forward over his outspread arms. "Success! You mean only that the corporation grip on this country will be stiffened more than any one ever dreamed. That's what your idea means, then? That's your success?"

Rawn nodded. "Of course. That has to be. Business conditions have changed. I told you, a few men are to control the destiny of this country. Individual competition—it's foolish now. There are differences among men. We have to take the world as we find it, and improve it if we can. When a fortunate man hits upon some great improvement in the living conditions of humanity, he gets rich. That's the way of life. Why fight it? Why not get on the right side, instead of the wrong side of the world? Why not trail in with the main bunch, if that's where the money is?"

"Go on, then, go on!" said Halsey after a long while, the expression on his face now changing. "I'm *going* to trail in, as you say. When does the riveting begin?"

"The public will be taken in when the larger interests have completed all their plans," answered John Rawn. "The stock of International may not go on the market for some time; indeed, I doubt if much of it ever gets out beyond our fellows,—it's too good a thing to share with the public. I know what'll happen with my fifty-one per cent.—it'll stay in my safety-box until John Rawn is in need of bread.

"We start with fifteen million bonds," he continued, "thirty millions preferred stock, with a forty per cent., common, as a bonus. It looks as though the thing would be all inside. The management—"

"But you?—You'll think me personal—"

"Not at all. I'll hold the control."

"Of what?"

"*Of all of it,*" said John Rawn, gently smiling, as he leaned his knuckles on the dingy table in the dining-room in Kelly Row.

Halsey smiled at him, tapping his finger on the side of his head. "I see," said he.

"No, I'm not crazy. *What* do you think you see?"

"Things don't happen in that way, Mr. Rawn. Inventors don't get off in the money like that. Don't tell me that."

"Right you are," said Rawn, dropping a clenched fist on the table top. "*Inventors* don't! But men of that same class—men of grip and grasp—*they* do get off where the money is! I'll show you. They won't rob John Rawn!"

VII

"Did they take it easy?" queried Halsey finally.

"Threatened to kill me, that was all! As I said, they locked the door. It was the traffic manager, Ackerman, who took it roughest. We both looked along his pistol barrel. 'All right,' I said. 'Shoot. Kill me, and what is there left? You *can't* take me in with you—it's only a question whether I'll take *you* in with *me*!

" 'Now, you listen,' I said to Standley and Ackerman—and I wasn't afraid of them—'I'll show you how to make something that everybody has to have. I'll put speed into the work of every laboring man—I'll double his efficiency, double his hours and halve his pay, and I'll cut off his ability to help himself. I'll make labor unions impossible. I'll gear up, pace up, stiffen up the whole theory of life and work, I tell you, gentlemen,' said I, 'so that one hour will count for two, one man will count for two, one wage will count for two! Do you get me, gentlemen?' I asked of them—just those two were in the office then, and

the door was locked behind me. 'You're big men,' said I, 'but you're not as big as I am. It's a cheap bluff about that gun,' I said to Ackerman. 'Put it up. You wouldn't dare kill me, or dare do anything I didn't want you to. I came to you because it was easier to walk down this hall than it was to walk across the street. Do you want me to walk across the street?' "

Rawn chuckled gently; and now indeed he did present the very image of self-confidence. "Well, then, they saw it," said he finally. "They didn't want me to walk across the street! Standley laughed at Ackerman. 'No *use* to kill him yet,' says he. I laughed then, we all laughed. 'No, it wouldn't be any use,' said I to them. 'The question is, how much I ought to give you.'

"Ackerman took it hard. He's a bulldog sort of man. 'You're damned impudent!' said he. 'I'll have you fired.'

"'I'm fired now!' says I to them. 'You think I'm only a common clerk. Didn't both of you come up from clerking? Can't I take you higher yet than where you are now?' The Old Man, Standley, nodded then; and pretty soon he reached out and took my hand. 'Come in, son,' says he. 'You're on.'

"Well, that's nearly all there was about it, Charley. I say to you, too, 'Come in, son—you're on.'

VIII

"Now then," he went on in his monologue, "we're up to the wait while the laws are being made, and while all the plans for financing the proposition are going through. We'll have to pro-rate this stuff with

the big railway companies, of course, and with the oil and steel industries, and some of the other leading combinations—Standley and Ackerman'll have no trouble, with their acquaintance among the big men of the East. You can't stop such men. Give them this idea of mine and you can't keep them from controlling this country. These are things that can't be altered."

"But it will alter the world!" exclaimed young Halsey, at last beginning to arouse. "Who knows how much power there is in the water of even one big river? You can use it over and over again. Why, on that one river—"

"Our river," said John Rawn, smiling.

"The people's river!" retorted Halsey fiercely. "Their river! God made that river, and all the rest of them, for something, I don't know what. But it wasn't for this."

"It'll have to work," answered John Rawn. "That river'll have to work to earn its keep—they'll all have to!"

"And the country—the republic—what will become of it?"

"The republic? That was a compromise. We perhaps had to live through that. Conditions in government change." Mr. Rawn spoke largely, finely, with a nice appreciation of all values.

"My God!" whispered Halsey. "What do you mean?"

IX

Rawn paid small attention to him, and he broke out yet more vehemently. "But it is an enormous thing—you are dealing with the power of powers! The

great force of the world is gravitation. It makes the world move, keeps the sun in its place. Water running down hill never tires. *It* doesn't know any eight-hour day."

"That term will cease to exist within two years," said John Rawn grimly. "It is a detestable thing. It has hampered business long enough."

"What do you mean?"

"There's no such thing as an arbitrary length for a day's work. The agreed day has lasted long enough. Money is made by setting other men to work for you, and then seeing that they do work. When you have something every man must use, when you've got the final whip-hand, it's you who set the working day, and not those who work for you."

"You're talking of using what God gave to human beings, and talking of making worse slaves of them to that gift. That's monstrous, Mr. Rawn!"

"Is it, then? To our notion it has been monstrous what these labor combinations have tried to do. Our great industrial leaders have been used unjustly. Yet labor is only mechanical power, that has to eat, and sleep, and wear clothes. *Our* kind of power doesn't have to do those things."

"But, Mr. Rawn! if that were true—of course it can't be true—what would there be left for the average man? I say that a man has a right to work when he likes, and a right to stop when he likes."

"Precisely; but the labor unions say that he must stop when they like. Why don't you use your brains, Charles? The old war was between capital, that is to say, concentrated power, and labor, which is unconcentrated power. That war has held back business in

this country for years. Now, when I told these men, Standley and Ackerman, that I had something which would wipe out every labor union within a few years—well, they *had* to come in with me, that was all. They *had* to.

X.

"The trouble with you," contended Rawn, himself now speaking fiercely as he loomed and lowered above Halsey, "the trouble with all you dreamers is that you have no real imagination. What's the use talking about the rights of the average man? When did the average man ever start or stop a revolutionary idea? When these things come, they come, and you can't help them. They had machinery riots in Great Britain a generation or two ago, but the spinning jennies stuck. It's always been so—progress sticks. The people have to adjust. But why should capital keep on fighting labor, or truckling to it, or treating with it, when we can take labor for nothing, as you just said, out of the power of gravitation—send it where we like, practically for nothing—labor that is power, labor that doesn't have to eat and doesn't have to be paid wages? I say if you had any imagination in your soul, my son, you'd *rise* to a thought like that."

"But that average man still must eat," said Halsey bitterly.

"Let him eat from our hands, then!" croaked John Rawn harshly. "I tell you, when I explained this thing—when I showed them what we had in our hands, those big men broke into a sweat. They could see it, if you can't.

"But as for me," he continued, standing erect and

spreading apart his hands, his voice softened almost to tremulousness, "when I saw where this thing really was going to put us all—in control of the labor question—beyond the attacks of the muckraking brigade—beyond the Supreme Court, if the time ever came for that—when I saw what perfect political, legislative, and industrial control we'd have in all this country—I say, when I realized what all this meant, I felt small and *humble*—I did indeed. I saw that I was only an instrument of Providence, that's all. The people? Why, we'll be the custodians of their welfare, that's all. Some men are set apart, devoted to that duty—humble agents of Providence, my son."

XI

A frown of consecrated unselfishness sat upon the brow of John Rawn. The younger man sat looking at him, wondering whether there were not here really some Homeric jest. "I didn't know it was in you," said he, rather unfortunately, at last, and hastened to cover: "That's right—it *is* imagination!"

Rawn raised a hand magnificently. "Never mind as to that, Charles. A great many didn't know it was in me. Why, a few months ago I told my wife something of this. She asked if I'd ever be rich enough to give her a silk dress! When the factory's up and the wheels are moving—then I'll take her out to the place, and I'll say to her just what you said to me—'You didn't think it was in me, did you? But it was!' Women nearly always think their husbands can't do anything in the world. A silk dress! My God! And she wanted a new gate in the picket fence, too."

"I didn't know that about women," said Halsey simply. "I thought it was the other way about."

"Well, well, I hope it may be that way in your case. Listen, Charles. I love my girl, Grace. She has always been a good child. I'm putting you in a place where you can take good care of her. I want you to stick to her for ever, through thick and thin. Remember, my son, that your wife is your wife, and that nothing must separate you from her."

"Maybe it'll work out something after my idea, after all." Halsey spoke pleasantly as he could at this mention of Grace.

"We'll take our chances but what it will work out *our* way!" said John Rawn, grinning in return. "You want to work for *man*, do you? Well, I want men to work for *me*!"

XII

"But we've no quarrel," he said suddenly, wheeling about. "We'll be partners from the start. There are some minor particulars to work out. I've got to have some sort of shop out in the back yard. Bring your little machine there—the model you said would not quite work."

"How long before we begin, Mr. Rawn?" asked Halsey simply.

"I have my last pay envelope in my pocket now, to-day."

"Didn't they give you any capital to start with?"

"I did not dare ask it."

"But how much funds have you of your own?"

"Mighty little. I've been kept down all my life. It's

been pretty much week to week with me, although Laura's been a wonderful manager, I'll say that."

"I've saved a little money," said Halsey, quietly as before. "I even believe Grace has saved her salary—eight a week. You see, we were making plans—here's my bank-book. A little over five hundred. How much would you need, Mr. Rawn, to take care of you for the next few days that you require for this work?"

"I've got to have some working models made, and it'll take some cash," said Rawn. "I've hardly had time to work out all these things as yet. All right. All the more pleasure for you to feel that you had a hand in it."

He reached across the table and took the dog-eared bank-book which Halsey extended, and ran his eye down the column of pitiable figures. The total was more than he himself had ever saved in all his life. Yet John Rawn stood there now calm, large and strong, and spoke in millions.

XIII

"All right, Mr. Rawn," said Halsey cheerfully. "Take it along. I'll draw the balance out for you. I reckon Grace and I won't have to wait any longer this way than we would the other."

"Well, be mighty careful to keep things to yourself, that's all!" was Rawn's answer. "If you're going to be my son-in-law, you're going to be loyal to my ideas. One of my ideas is that a man has a right to what he can take."

"Mr. Rawn, do you know anything about socialism?" asked Halsey suddenly.

"Not very much. Why should I?"

"There's sort of a brotherhood, or chapter, or society, or what you'd call it here, you know."

"I've heard so."

"And they let anybody who is interested come to the meetings—I've been there often—did I ever tell you? Our rooms are up-stairs over a saloon, up under the rafters. We have lanterns there, the way the revolutionists used to have over in Europe, when they had to meet in secret. We have speakers there sometimes—from Milwaukee, New York, even from Europe. And I want to tell you it's astonishing what a talk you'll hear there sometimes, from some chap that you wouldn't think had it in him—just rough-dressed fellows that look as if they hadn't a dollar in the world."

"They usually haven't," said John Rawn coldly. "They want to get the dollars of men like myself and my friends, who really have done something in the way of developing this country. But one thing sure, you'll cut out that brotherhood business when you go to work with us. The rights of man!—the future of this country! Why, good God, boy, with the grip you can get on business, with us to help you, what difference does it make to you whether you call this a republic or anything else? What *is* this republic? That is, what *was* it?"

XIV

Halsey sat staring at him fixedly for some time, without making answer. Rawn, carelessly buttoning up in his pocket the bank-book, as though it had been his own, rose at length and held out his hand.



M. LEONE
BRACKER

"You're a good boy, Charles," said he. "You've done the best you knew, and that's about all I've done. You couldn't say, of course, that our ideas have been the same in regard to this discovery, so I suppose we can't wonder they are not the same in regard to its eventual application. Let's not argue about that. We'll start out with our little shop, the first thing."

The young man still looked at him, still withheld comment. Rawn, once more full of himself, almost forgot him now. He stood erect, his arms spread out, in a favorite posture, as though exhorting a multitude. A pleasant, gentle, generous smile spread over his countenance, a smile which showed his content with himself, his future prospects, his past performances.

"You ought to have been there with me, Charles, when I talked to old Standley and his side partner, Ackerman. *That* was the big scene of my whole life!"

"The big scene?" said Halsey, half musingly. "No! Maybe not. We don't know what there may be on ahead."

"Isn't that the truth!" assented John Rawn graciously. "When a man of brains and energy gets his start, there's no telling where he won't go, or what he won't do. Yes, that's the truth!"

CHAPTER X

THE WOODSHED IN KELLY ROW

I

THE one astonishing thing about life, as we have but now mentioned, is its utter commonplaceness. It is a terrible thing to die, to end our connection with life as we know it; yet folk die, and the world accepts the fact with not more than a few hours' concern. Folk are born, a very wonderful thing, yet a common. We flash messages across the sea—as soon we shall across the ether, to other planets. The latter event will be but of brief interest. We travel by impounded steam, and have long ago ceased to marvel at that miracle. Soon we will travel by means of other power, at speeds inconceivable to-day. Were that time here we would not wonder. It is all, all commonplace. And none of us does much thinking. It is only over the unimportant things that we ponder. Thus, over a revolution in politics we chatter excitedly; but the revolution in principles excites us not at all. The revolution in science, in thought, in life, is accepted, when it comes, with no concern, as though belonging to us from time immemorial; as indeed it did.

It was wholly within human practice that affairs should now go on at Kelly Row much as they had al-

ways gone, in spite of the fact that Kelly Row now harbored, in a certain woodshed back of the dingy Rawn abode, ideas and deeds that had not earlier been known in Kelly Row routine. Here Mr. Rawn and his intending son-in-law were carrying on experiments whose most immediate result, in case of success, would be the extrication of Mr. Rawn from rather an awkward situation; because, although Mr. Rawn, in the usual and commonplace human fashion, had taken as his own an idea when he saw it, he negligently had done so forgetful of the fact that it still lacked many features as a definite commercial proposition.

II

Rawn had told the truth regarding his resources. He had but one month's salary in his pocket when these final experiments began, and for this money there was just as much need as there ever had been in any other month; for Laura Rawn had quite as much use, at the going scale of living, for one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month now, as she had had for seventy-five dollars a month five years earlier. Yet when Laura Rawn suggested a deferred payment on certain weekly bills, the shopkeepers to whom she had been paying her stipend daily for years demurred sorely. The truth is that the poorest way in the world to establish a credit is to pay bills in cash. Foolishly allow a man to see your cash, and he can see nothing else. Pay him partly in cash, partly in good checks, partly in bad ones, and partly not at all, and he will trust you largely; this being a commercial truth not known of all men, although worth knowing. It may

be seen, therefore, that young Halsey's little capital of five hundred dollars was as important as young Halsey's original idea; which latter Mr. Rawn had also appropriated.

So now these two bought very considerable bundles of copper wire and other things, and made several machines of this and the other shape, and tried divers experiments which need not be set down here. In all this work young Halsey's manual skill and technical training continually was in quest, John Rawn for the most part standing by and frowning heavily, watching Jacob labor for the earning of Rachel: for Halsey knew this surrender of his idea was the price of Grace. Halsey had little hope of ultimate success in his appliances. Not so Rawn. He had something akin to a feeling of certainty.

III

Differing thus—yet who shall say they were not partners, after all, since all these things were true regarding them?—they at last emerged from the woodshed in Kelly Row, after many long weeks, whose deeds we need not further chronicle. They carried into the front room of the Rawn house in Kelly Row a small machine, which presently was to do large things; that is to say, to save the self-respect of certain prominent railway men who by this time were convinced that they had been hypnotized to their disadvantage; and also to save the face of John Rawn, although he had not known his face had needed saving.

This novel and mysterious little machine, with a

glass jar underneath, many coils and wheels within, and an odd, toothed crest of little upreaching metal fingers, had been produced only at great cost, great sacrifice. It had seemed wholly right and reasonable that all of young Halsey's five hundred dollars should disappear little by little, and it had done so, long ago. It seemed proper that the small savings which Grace had deposited in a tin baking-powder can—for she was like her mother, part ground-squirrel, and secretive—should also disappear little by little, and they also had gone. In some way, only the women knew how, they all had had enough to eat, so far as that meant actually necessary food; but the entire Rawn family were a gaunt and haggard, as well as a wearied and anxious quartette, when finally they gathered about the little machine out of the woodshed. Their play was on one card, and the card was turned. What was it?

If either of the women doubted, she held her peace. Rawn did not doubt. He had been sure all along that Charles Halsey, engineer, would work out his, Rawn's, idea.

And young Halsey, engineer, had done that very thing. There is no roof in all the world ever has covered a vaster and more epoch-making thought than did the patched cover of the woodshed in Kelly Row.

On the afternoon of the day wherein they emerged from the woodshed, these two, none too well clad, took the street-car to the city, Halsey with a newspaper bundle under his arm. In it was what Mr. Rawn called his second-current motor, which comprised the basic idea of International Power, soon to loom large in the business world.

CHAPTER XI

THE TEST

I

IN the most commonplace way in the world, and quite as though he had always done this very thing, Mr. Henry Warfield Standley, president of the I. & D. A. Railway Co., warned in advance by Mr. Rawn's telephone, came to the door himself. Presently the three, Rawn, Halsey and the president of the company for which both so long had worked, sat at the long glass-covered table, where lay many papers. The president pushed a button and ordered the attendance of Mr. Theodosius Ackerman, the general traffic manager; so that now they made four in company. The G. T. M., as he was known, had suffered great abrasion of the nerves by the delay of Mr. Rawn to produce a machine done up in a newspaper or in any way whatsoever, and he had joined the president in a disgusted belief that in some way he had been made foolish. He frowned now savagely at John Rawn, and John Rawn now, his hat on his head, frowned quite as savagely at him.

Very little was said, but after a time young Halsey nervously removed the newspaper from his little machine, and displayed it uncovered on the table, a ribbed and coiled and tooled little model, showing file marks

here and there, and resembling nothing in particular in the world. They four regarded it calmly, curiously, this machine destined in the belief of some to double the length of the workman's day, to halve the distance around the world, to make or break fortunes, to make or break a country. The president started to jest, but his voice shook a trifle after all. To the general traffic manager the contrivance seemed absurdly small and inadequate. He choked so much he could not talk. Rawn did not smile. He continued his heavy frown. Young Halsey, tacitly elected spokesman by Rawn, cleared his throat as he addressed the president of the road, for whom he still felt naught but awe.

"We have put our receiver in tune with the dynamo in the basement of this building, Mr. Standley," began he, finally. Both the magnates frowned at Mr. Halsey's presumption and turned to Mr. Rawn. The latter waved a large gesture.

"I forgot to say, gentlemen, that Mr. Halsey has aided me in working out my model, and it is just as well he should explain my idea." Halsey therefore went on:

"And now you can see right here, on the table before you, about all the rest of it that we have. It isn't attached to anything at all. There is no wired connection of any sort whatever. Now if we can run that electric fan over there with 'juice' that we can take right out of the air—with the second current which we take out of the motor in the basement—just as well as the primary current wired to the fan will run it, why, then, it looks to me as though our receiver here ought to be accepted as a working device."

The room was silent now. They sat looking at him. He resumed:

"Besides, this receiver is more powerful than you think. I suppose I could burst that fan wide open with it, by just wiring the two, after disconnecting the original wiring of the fan to the house dynamo."

Halsey spoke very calmly, yet the hands of the president of the road, resting on the edge of the table, trembled slightly. The fighting red had disappeared from the face of the G. T. M. He was bluish gray, as though deathly ill. He was, however, the first to recover. "Well, why *don't* you burst it, then?" he exclaimed savagely, mopping at his forehead.

II

"Very well," said Halsey quietly. "But first I suppose I ought to explain just a little about the basic idea under this whole proposition. You see that table there—we regard it as motionless. As a matter of fact, it is full of nothing but motion, so tremendously rapid that we are unconscious of it. That wall yonder is nothing but a continuous series of vibrations, of inconceivable rapidity. This floor is full of force, of energy. It's all around us—energy, force, motion.

"In your studies in physics, gentlemen, you learned that heat and motion are convertible. And you learned about the resultant of power—which always, so far as any accepted law of physics goes, is in ratio to the distance through which applied.

"Now, what I've done," said Halsey—John Rawn frowned and coughed heavily, but no one noticed him, and Halsey himself was unconscious of using the first

personal pronoun—"is just to cut off all need of considering the distance through which force is applied. Now, I don't know whether I can make it entirely plain to you, except by physical demonstration, but what I've done here is to carry further the idea of wireless telegraphy. We have here, to use an understandable figure of speech, a receiver which is the equivalent of a sounding-board—a sounding-board in tune to the vibrations of the second or free current of electricity.

"Gentlemen, our idea was, in terms, that of harnessing up molecular activity. If we have done that, we have, of course, tapped the one exhaustless reservoir of power."

III

The president of the railway had grown yet paler; but he nodded wisely, and Halsey went on:

"There isn't any miracle in science that ought to cause us any wonder. It took science a long time to learn that heat and motion are interchangeable. I strike a cold piece of iron with a moving hammer, and the iron gets hot. It was cold before, and there hasn't been any fire near it. That's just as wonderful a thing—although we all accept it without question—as all that I've got here on the table before you. If I can stop some of the free energy that is vibrating all around us, I'm going to get either motion or heat out of it, and that's simple. We have gone far enough to know that this little receiver here, gentlemen, *will* arrest the free current of electricity, force, energy, whatever you care to call it, that's in the air and which can be multiplied and transmitted through the

air. Why and how it does that, I can't just tell, myself. No one has ever been able to explain everything about the magnetic needle, but we use it just the same. We don't so much care what it is if we can use it."

"Not a damned bit!" growled the G. T. M. "But *can* we? Why don't you get busy with that fan?"

Halsey rose and went over to the electric fan and snipped off a length of the wire, so that the fan stood free and unattached on its shelf. The loose wire he now busied himself in attaching to the fan and in turn to the little model on the table.

"To my mind," said he, after finishing this work, and arresting a finger above a little connecting lever in the side of the receiver, "it's a very beautiful thought that underlies all this. The forces which run through this receiver will never grow tired. Labor will be a joy for them, a delight, as labor ought to be in any form. Mr. Rawn and I don't always quite agree about that," he smiled, still with his finger above the little lever. "What I hope to do is to change the working-man from being an object back into being a man, so that labor may be a joy and not a dread."

"Then we don't want it," grinned the president, feebly essaying a jest. "Mr. Rawn and I were agreed that it would do just the other thing!"

"Well, go on with it!" growled Ackerman. "I'm a busy man. To hell with the story! We want results!"

Every man present sprang back from the little instrument on the table. There came a slowly increasing purr of the motor, a series of intense blue sparks showing at the toothed points of reception. The

blades of the fan began to revolve faster and faster; so fast that at length both eye and ear ceased to record their doings. Then, after sight and sound had failed to serve, there came a crash!

There was no fan on the shelf where it had stood. Fragments of metal were buried in the woodwork, in the wall. John Rawn wiped the blood from a cut on his cheek. No one said anything. It was quite commonplace, after all.

IV

"You wished to see what it would do," said Halsey grimly. "The power seems to be there. Any time you like, any amount you like. And you saw that it didn't come in here by wire—it was only transmitted from the receiver, not to it. The fan is broken, but the receiver is just the way we left it. Well, it looks as though we had settled a few questions, doesn't it?"

Standley, pale, could only gasp, "Why, it's—it's dangerous!" he said. "It's devilish! Look there!" He pointed at the blood on Rawn's face. Rawn remained silent.

"There is no use applying undue force to a minor purpose," said Halsey, "any more than there is in throwing on the high speed of a car going down hill. But our reserve is there, gentlemen, just the same. By increasing the size of our receivers we can develop power to turn any amount of machinery that can be geared together—any number of machines, large or small, at any place. I only wanted to show what the real power is in this device of ours. Our receiver is very small, you see."

They all remained silent for a time. Standley at last drew a long breath.

"We're saved!" said he. "What do you say to it, Jim?" This to Ackerman.

"It looks like a go," said the latter, drawing a deep sigh. "We've seen enough right here to make good with our people back East; and we've got enough right now to get the public in."

The president turned an agitated eye upon John Rawn. "Mr. Rawn," said he, "referring to the tenor of our earlier conversation, I desire to say that we are not in the habit of giving the lion's share to anybody—"

"Suit yourself," said John Rawn, smiling.

"But in this case, as I said to you at first, there's so much in this if there's anything at all, that there's no use splitting hairs over it." He receded rapidly from the position he coveted but saw he could not hold.

"We ought to begin work at once. Er—Mr. Rawn, do you happen to have any present need for any money—personally?"

"No," answered John Rawn calmly, "I am in no need of funds. When the organization is completed, and I begin my work as president of the power company, I shall be glad to go on the pay-roll, of course. I should add now that I expect Mr. Halsey to be my general manager in the mechanical department."

"In regard to salaries," said the president, hesitating, "we might roughly sketch out something—"

"My own salary will be a hundred thousand dollars a year," said Mr. Rawn quietly. "I don't think we should ask Mr. Halsey to work for less than five thousand. Do you, gentlemen?"

"I've worked for less, myself," said Ackerman grimly.

"There shall be no haggling, gentlemen, no haggling," said the president blandly. "It shall be as Mr. Rawn suggests. By the way, a near call that, Rawn."

He waved a hand at the bloody cut on our hero's face. That gentleman drew a half sigh of unconscious triumph. It was the first time any one in that office had ever dropped the "Mister" from his name! He saw himself entering into the charmed circle.

"Suppose it had come a half inch closer?" suggested the president.

"It didn't," said John Rawn. "It was never meant to."

"That's the talk!" drawled Ackerman. "I'll tell you, Rawn, come in to-morrow. We'll get the patent lawyers and our corporation counsel, and begin work on this thing."

v

That was all there was about it, the proceedings being wholly prosaic and commonplace. Mr. Halsey found again his newspaper, again wrapped up his machine therein, took it under his arm, and hesitatingly turned toward the door, the palest now, and most unhappy of them all. He had denied his own first-born. He had publicly disclaimed ownership in this idea. Rawn was to have a hundred thousand dollars a year, he only a twentieth of that. Just where and how was Rawn twenty times as valuable as himself, when all the time it had been he.—But then, what matter? Five thousand dollars a year and Grace!

What more could any man desire than that? He forced that to console him, forced himself to believe it sordid to haggle on the price of love; and so passed down in the elevator, out through the corridors to the street, without much further speech to any.

"Charles," said his intended father-in-law, as they approached the nearest corner, "do you happen to have a quarter left? I feel somewhat hungry, and for the time I have no money at all with me."

CHAPTER XII

THE HELPMET

I

AFTER all, Charles Halsey still was young enough to be happy. There are really very few delights for the man nearing middle age. The period of joy in living is confined to what time, passing upon the crowded street, the young man notes the sidelong, half-concealed glance of the unknown young woman, unconsciously taking in his goodliness, his god-likeness, such as that may be; or to what time the young woman, in turn, after some such incident, turning by merest chance to look at some passing cloud, or to note the brightness of the sky, finds that some young man whom she but now passed also has turned about, by mere chance, to examine the colors of the sky, and so by accident has fastened gaze upon her instead! As the grasshopper cometh on to be a burden, the time arrives when this or that gray-browed man may gaze at passing damsel and elicit no reward in turn. Sitting in crowded vehicle he glances above the rim of his paper, and suddenly smiles to himself that his mature charms have riveted the attention of the young girl across the aisle. Happy moment—were it not that closer scrutiny would prove the young girl's eye

to be fixed, not upon middle age, but upon ruddy-faced youth in the seat beyond!

No hope for Graybeard after middle age, when the grasshopper is a burden; save such hope as may be his through the power of money. Thenceforth perhaps remain for him only such self-deceits as that money may purchase fidelity, joy, love, happiness of any sort; which deceits end later on, in that hour of severe self-searching which remains for each of us just before we depart for other spheres. As for this particular obloid sphere and its tenantry, there are two seasons—a season of growth and flower, a season of seeding and decaying. As for delights, life passes at that indefinite period, from twenty-five to fifty-five years of age, let us say, when the opposite sex, passing us unknown upon the street, turns no longer the inadvertent sidelong gaze!

II

When John Rawn walked toward his home after the events of the meeting last foregoing described, he cast few sidelong glances, and received few. If that were faithfulness to a worthy wife, make the most of it. Upon the other hand note that, as Mr. Halsey trod the air on his way to Kelly Row, his newspaper bundle under his arm, there did not lack abundance of young women who saw him from the corner of the eye as he passed on. Forsooth, he was a young man of very adequate physical appearance, clean, hard, high of cheek, square of shoulder, his hair dark and long, his eye gray, direct, kindly. His life hitherto had been so narrow that he had lived well and wisely. His

powers were well preserved, he remained physically clean and fit. Rather a decent chap, you would have called him, as he passed now, his strong chin well forward, his eye shaft-like and strong in its glances. Not an extraordinary young man, perhaps, but certainly serving well enough to show that youth speaks to youth; and that, when youth is past, all is past. Excepting—as John Rawn would have noted—the making of money; which means not much to youth itself, but which means all to middle age.

Of all this very wise and useful philosophy, be sure, Mr. Halsey was ignorant, or regarding it, was indifferent. He had forgotten that almost his last silver coin had furnished Mr. Rawn his last meal, in which Halsey himself had not joined. Grace! That was in his mind. He was young. Success was now at hand; because presently he should have five thousand dollars a year in salary, and be married to the dearest girl in all the world. It is always the dearest girl in all the world, for men when they are less than thirty-five, say twenty-five years of age. But Halsey did not philosophize. He was guided only by some unconscious cerebration when he descended from the street-car and bent his way toward Kelly Row. He pulled up at the stoop of the third house in that homely procession of brick abodes which rented for twenty dollars a month—with no repairs by the landlord.

III

He found Grace at home, Mrs. Rawn also at home. They came to meet him, laid hold of him before he was well into the narrow little hall. There was that

in his face, in his eyes, in his soul which told them that success at last had come to Kelly Row.

He put his hand in Mrs. Rawn's, his arm about Grace's waist. They two were young, they were very happy. Their hands were interclasped when presently they all passed from the hall into the little parlor. The eyes of Grace Rawn became soft, luminous, tender. The young man had come into her life. She was very happy. She was young. Ambition was as yet unknown to her. Her coin-current was not yet money; which of all things has the very least of purchasing power. She was almost beautiful now.

Mrs. Rawn, grave, thin, careworn, bent by many trials, her hair gray above her temples, her eyes dark-rimmed and sunken somewhat under her dark-arched brows, had seated herself upon the opposite side of the room, waiting, her own joy visible in the silent illumination of her face. She, too, was very happy in her way; or rather, mildly contented. While almost every woman, at one or other period of her life, admires what is known as a wicked young man; the average mother having a daughter about to be married admires rather what is known as a good young man. And Charles Halsey was what may be called comprised within that loose and indefinite description, not always covering admirable or manly qualities, but in this case serving very well.

"You've won, Charley," said Laura Rawn at last. "It is true! Thank God!"

For these blessings about to be received, Mr. Rawn thanked himself; Grace thanked Charles; Charles thanked Grace; only Laura Rawn had nothing left to thank excepting an impersonal and remote diety.

IV

They sat for a time thus in the little parlor, amid an abomination of desolation in black walnut horrors, tables done after a French king who must have revolved in his grave at contemplation thereof, chairs requiring nice feats in balancing upon their slippery haircloth floors, a sofa of like sort, too large for one, yet not large enough for two. There gazed down upon their love—as though in admiration as to love's consequences—rows of bisque shepherdesses and china dogs. The Dying Gaul also bent on them a saddened gaze. None the less, in spite of all, young Halsey shamelessly maintained his position on the perilous sofa, an arm around young Miss Rawn's waist.

V

Laura Rawn sat across the room, something still dangling from her grasp which had been there when she met Halsey in the hall. Halsey at length caught sight of this object. Glancing from the mother's hands toward those of the daughter, Halsey caught up the latter, looking with close scrutiny at what was now to be his own. He found the ends of Grace's fingers blackened and rough. He glanced back again to her mother's hands, worn with toil. The ends of her fingers, also, grasping this loose something, were blackened and rough.

"No more work for Grace," said he, lovingly tightening his clasp on the fingers in his own.

"But I say—" this to Grace— "what makes your fingers so rough, dear? I never did notice that before."

"You've not noticed anything for two months!" said Grace chidingly. "Why, it's sewing, of course, that does it. A needle roughens up one's finger in spite of a thimble, don't you know?"

"You were sewing—for *us*?" he ventured daringly, yet blushing as he spoke. "A girl has a lot of sewing to do, I suppose—when she's—getting ready. But, Grace—I'm to have five thousand dollars a year! Five thousand! No more sewing then for Grace, I'm thinking."

"Yes?" said Grace, smiling in her slow way. "I think Ma and I would be glad to believe we'd never have to see a needle again. *She* kept me at it. You see, Charley, we've been keeping the wolf from the front door and the kitchen door, while you and Father were guarding the woodshed."

"What do you mean?" Then suddenly, "You don't tell me—you don't mean that—? Was *that* what made your hands so rough, yours and Mrs. Rawn's yonder? What have you got there, Mrs. Rawn—something in silk? Oh, a pair of braces, eh? For me? How nice of you."

Grace smiled again. "I'll be jealous of Ma. Shall I go and get my own work to show you?"

"You mean for your father, of course—"

"Indeed, no. Neither Pa nor you can afford silk embroidered braces, Charles! I've done six pairs this week, and Ma—well Ma must have done a dozen. She's wonderful."

"But what do you mean?" asked the young man, still puzzled. Grace said nothing further, but held up her blackened finger-tips and looked him in the eye. A blush of comprehension came to his face.

"You women!" he exclaimed. "You've worked as hard as we did; and we didn't know!"

"We had to do something," said Mrs. Rawn quietly. "I tried a number of things. We could earn practically nothing in the sweatshop work. Grace addressed envelopes here at home at night, for a while—but that's what every other girl in all the city's doing, I think. I saw some of these embroidered things in the window of a men's furnishing shop. I went in and told the man I could do them as well as that for twenty-five cents a pair. We've had as much as thirty cents for some of our best ones. Why, dear me! I hadn't done any work in silk for years and years; but it all came back. We earned quite a bit here. It kept the table."

"My God!" said Halsey. "And I've been eating here!"

VI

"It was our part," said Laura Rawn. "It was all we could do. A woman just has to do the best she can, you know. Well, we helped."

"A woman has to do the best she can," repeated Laura Rawn gently, seeing that this left Halsey awkward. "If she's a true woman, she tries to help. I want that Grace should always think of it in just that way."

That, it seemed, was the foolish philosophy of Laura Rawn; a philosophy not often written on the docket of divorce courts, to be sure. Perhaps it is—or once was—inscribed on dockets elsewhere.

BOOK TWO

CHAPTER I

THE NEW MR. RAWN

SOME wise man has said that a man changes entirely each seven years of his life, becoming wholly different in every portion, particle and atom of his bodily bulk and losing altogether what previously were the elements, parts, portions or constituent molecules which made himself. So much as to the physical body. In respect of epochal changes in a man's character we may wholly approve the dictum of the philosopher, though perhaps not agreeing to any specific seven-years period. Thus, in the case of John Rawn, the first stage of his career, in which he lived without any very great alteration, occupied some seven and forty years. Yet it was a wholly different John Rawn who, at forty-eight, found himself seated at the vast and shining desk of the president of the International Power Company, in the city of Chicago. The past was so far behind him that he could not with the utmost mental striving reconstruct the picture of it. He was a wholly new, distinct and different man. The

old and deadly days were gone. There never had been such a place as Kelly Row. Fate had performed its miracle. Here was John Rawn, where alone he ever could have belonged—in a place of power.

Surrounded by a delicious sense of his own fitness and competence, smug, urbane, well-clad, basking in the balmy glow of his own glory, exulting in his own proved ability to conquer fate, John Rawn, on his first day as chief executive of the International Power Company, paused for a time and leaned back in his chair, giving himself over to luxurious imaginings.

II

There is no peculiar delight in owning power unless one may exercise that power. There being no dog present which he might kick out of the way, John Rawn essayed other divertisements. The harness of business system was still rather new to him, at least the harness which pertains to this stage of a business system. He was happily unaware that he was a lay figure here, with few actual duties beyond those of looking impressive—happily ignorant that shrewder and more skilled minds than his had seen to it that his official duties should be few and well hedged about. He had not as yet ever worked at a desk blessed with a row of push buttons, and was ignorant as yet, and very naturally, in regard to the particular function of each of these several buttons whose mother of pearl faces now confronted him. Resolving to take them seriatim, he pushed the one farthest to the right; which, as it chanced, was the one arranged to call to him his personal stenographer.

The door opened silently. John Rawn looked up and saw standing before him a young woman whom he had never seen before. "I beg pardon, Madam," said he, half rising. "I didn't know you were there. How did—is there anything I can do for you?"

"I am the stenographer assigned for your work, Mr. Rawn, until you shall have concluded your own arrangements in the office," answered the young woman. Her voice was even and well controlled, her enunciation perfect. She was not in the least confused over this *contre-temps*, else had the self-restraint not to notice it. She stood easily, note-book in hand, with no fidgeting, in such fashion that one must at once have classified her as a well-poised human being.

Or, again, one might have said that here was a very beautiful human creature. She was almost tall, certainly and wholly shapely; young, but fully and adequately feminine; womanly indeed in every well curved line. Her hands and feet, her arms—the latter now disclosed by half sleeves—all were of good modeling. Her hair, piled up in rather high Grecian coiffure and confined by a bandeau of gold-brocaded ribbon, was perhaps just in the least startling. But you might not have noticed that with disapproval had you seen the shining excellence of the hair itself, brown, either dark or blonde as the light had it. Her forehead was oval, her chin also oval, the curve of the cheek running gently into the chin like the bow moulding of a racing yacht. Her teeth were even and brilliant, her lips well colored, her eyes large and just a trifle full, with thin lids, and in color blue; as you might have said with hesitation, just as you might have been uncertain regarding the blondness of her hair. Over the eyes

the brows were straight, brown, well-defined. Her nose—since one must particularize in all such intimate matters—was a trifle thin, high in the bridge; thus completing what lacked, if anything, to convey the aspect of a woman aristocratic, reserved and dignified.

III

Virginia Delaware, Mr. Rawn's personal stenographer, was born the daughter of a St. Louis baker. She had, however, passed through that epoch of her development and by some means best known to herself and her family, had attained a good education, ended by three years in a young ladies' finishing school in the East. By what process of reasoning she had considered that this was the proper field for her ambitions, is something which need not concern us. She was here; and as she stood thus, easy, beautiful, competent, she was as much a new and different Virginia Delaware from the Virginia Delaware of seven years' earlier date as was this new John Rawn different from the old. The world moves. Especially as to American girls does it move.

"I am the stenographer assigned to you, Mr. Rawn, until you shall have concluded your own arrangements." She spoke very quietly. Rawn recovered himself quickly.

"I was just about to say," he went on, "that I intended to have the boy get my car ready. Would you tell him to have it at the door in fifteen minutes? Then come back. There are one or two little letters."

A few moments later the young woman was seated

at a small table near the end of the desk. Without any nervousness she awaited his pleasure.

"I'll trouble you for that newspaper, if you don't mind, Miss—?"

"Miss Delaware."

"Yes, Miss Delaware. Thank you!"

He glanced down the columns of the market reports. "Take this," he said, turning to the young woman.

"Chandler and Brown, Brokers, City. Dear Sirs: Sell me two hundred Triangle Rubber at three forty. Yours truly."

She was up with him before he had finished his first official act. He turned again:

"Kitter, Moultrie & Johnson, Bakersfield, California. Gents: Cinch all the Guatemala shares you can at eight cents and draw on me if you need any money. Yours truly."

Mr. Rawn could not think of anything else. Few details had been allowed to reach his desk. He was the last sieve in a really well-arranged series of business screens. But even in this brief test he had a feeling that the new stenographer would prove efficient. In three or four minutes more he was yet better assured of that fact; for before he could find his coat and hat she entered gently and laid the completed letters on his desk:

"Messrs. Chandler and Brown, 723 Exchange Building, Chicago: Gentlemen: Please sell for my account two hundred (200) shares Triangle Rubber,

at three hundred and forty dollars (\$340) or the market, obliging, Yours very truly.'

"Messrs Kitter, Moultrie & Johnson, Bakersfield, California. Gentlemen: Please buy for my account all the Guatemala Oil which you can pick up at eight cents (8c). You are at liberty to draw on me as you require funds. Allow two points margin. Yours very truly."

"Very good," said Mr. Rawn. A slight perspiration stood on his forehead. The young woman silently disappeared. "Two points!" said Mr. Rawn. "By Jove!"

IV

Mr. Rawn remained well assured of several things. First, that he was going to make sixty-eight thousand dollars out of the Triangle Rubber shares, which had been given him practically as a present, or as "bonus," or as tribute, by Standley and Ackerman and their friends at the inception of the International Power Company; second, that he might perhaps make a quarter of a million out of his inside knowledge derived from these same sources, regarding plans in Guatemala Oil; third, that his new stenographer seemed to have a good head, and was not apt to be forward.

Whereupon, having concluded his first wearying day's labor, Mr. Rawn donned his well-cut overcoat and shining top hat, and with much dignity passed out the private door of his office. The elevator was crowded with common people, among them, several persons of the lower classes. Mr. Rawn felt that the

president of a great corporation like International Power ought by all rights to have an elevator of his own. This conviction of the injustice wrought upon presidents was so borne in upon him that, when he stepped up to the long and shining car which the chauffeur held at the curb, his face bore a severe frown and his lower lip protruded somewhat. Feeling thus, he rebuked the chauffeur, who touched his hat.

"You kept me waiting!" said John Rawn, glowering. "I wait for no one."

The chauffeur touched his hat again. "Very good, sir. If you please, where shall I drive?"

"Take me to the National Union Club," growled Mr. Rawn. Already it may easily be seen that one of Mr. Rawn's notions of impressing the world with his importance was to be rude to his servants—a not infrequent device among our American great folk.

The chauffeur touched his hat once more and sprang to his seat after closing the door of the car. In a few minutes Mr. Rawn was deposited at the wide stairway of one of the most estimable clubs of the city; where his name had been proposed by members of such standing in the railway and industrial world that the membership committee felt but one course open to them.

A boy took his hat and coat, following him presently with a check into a wide room, well furnished with great chairs and small tables. Rawn stood somewhat hesitant. He knew almost nobody. Moreover, his club frightened him, for it was his first, and it differed largely from Kelly Row. A fat man in one group gathered about a small table recognized him and came

forward to shake his hand. "Join us, Mr. Rawn?" he asked. Some introductions followed, then another question, relative to the immediate business in hand.

"You may bring me a Rossington," said Mr. Rawn, with dignity, "but please do not have too much orange peel in it." He spread his coat tails with perhaps unnecessary wideness as he pushed back into the great chair. You or I might not have had precisely his air in precisely these surroundings, but John Rawn had methods of his own.

"I've *never* liked too much orange peel," said he gravely, putting the tips of his fingers together. "The last time, I thought they had just a trace too much. A suspicion is all I ever cared for."

They listened to him with respect. As a matter of fact, Mr. Rawn had never tasted alcoholic beverages of any sort whatever until within the year last past. All the better for his physique, as perhaps one might have said after a glance at these pudgier forms adjacent to him now. All the better, too, for his nerves. But it is not always the case that the beginner in alcohol can drink less than one of ancient acquaintance therewith; the reverse is often true. In John Rawn's system strong drink produced only a somber glow, a confident enlargement of his belief in his own powers. It never brought levity, mirth, flippancy into his demeanor.

V

His acquaintances saw now in Mr. Rawn, the last member received into their august affiliations, a man of breeding, long used to good things in life, and

trained to a nice discrimination. Perhaps the fact that he was the new president of the new International Power Company, a concern capitalized at many millions and reputed to have one of the best things going, may have brought added respect to the attitude of some of those who sat about the little table. Thus, one passed a gold cigarette-box; yet another proffered selections from divers cigars, of the best the club could provide; which was held thereabouts to be the best that any club could provide.

"I was just telling Mason, here, when you came in, Rawn," said the large man who had risen to greet him, "that at last it looks as though that jumping-jack, Roosevelt, was down and out for good. I always said he'd get his before long. Good God! When you stop to think about it, hasn't he been a menace to the prosperity of this country?"

"He certainly has been the everlasting butter-in," ventured a by-sitter.

"In my belief," said Rawn solemnly, "he hasn't the ghost of a show for the nomination—not the ghost of a show!"

"Certainly not," assented the large man. "He's been politically repudiated in his own state and city for years, and now it's just soaking into the heads of western men that he won't do. He's been the Old Man of the Sea on all kinds of business development. In my belief, half the labor troubles in this country are traceable to him—anyhow to him and the confounded newspapers that keep stirring things up. Progress! If these progressives had their way, I reckon we'd all be progressing backwards, that's where we'd be. Look at all these new men, too! It makes

me sick to think how our Senate is changing." He spoke of "our" Senate with a fine proprietary air.

"But there is talk that Roosevelt'll run again," said another speaker, reaching for his second cocktail.

"No chance!" said the large man, who had had his second. "This whole fool movement for unsettling business is going to come to an end. There never was a time when unsuccessful people were not discontented. Let the people growl if they like. They haven't got any reason. Talk's cheap. Let 'em talk."

"Money talks best," ventured John Rawn oracularly, nodding his head. The others solemnly assented to this very original proposition.

"The business of this country," went on the large man, "has got nothing to do with Teddy's ten commandments."

"I have no doubt," said John Rawn, "that Mr. Roosevelt has, as you say, been the most disturbing cause in the unsettling of labor conditions all over the country. I've been following his speeches. He's always putting out that same old foolish doctrine about the equality of mankind—a doctrine exploded long ago. It's nothing short of criminal to talk that way to the lower classes to-day—it only makes them more unhappy. What's the use in misleading the laboring man and making him think he's going to get something he can't get? I tell you, I believe that at heart Roosevelt is a Socialist. Anyhow, he's a stumbling-block to the progress of this republic. Why, in our own factory—"

"You're right," interrupted the first speaker. "Absolutely right. That sort of talk means ruin to the country. I'd like to know what all the men that make

up these labor unions would do if we were to shut down all the mills and factories and offices—where'd they get any place to work if we didn't give it to them? Yet they bite the very hand that feeds them."

"It sometimes looks as though we'd lost almost the whole season's work in the Senate," gloomily contributed another of the group. "We've got the tariff framed up to suit us, but how long will it last? Besides, what's the use of a tariff, if we're going to have strikes that practically are riots and revolutions, all over the country? Our laboring men are not willing to work. That's the trouble, I tell you—all this foolishness about the brotherhood of man. Oh, hell!"

"You have precisely my attitude, my friend," said John Rawn, turning to him gravely. "Precisely. I have always said so."

VI

They all nodded now gravely as they sipped their second or third cocktails. Here and there a face grew more flushed, a tongue more fluent. The large man, colder headed, presently turned to Mr. Rawn.

"By the way, Rawn," said he, "I hear it around the street all the time that you've got about the best thing there is going—this International Power. What's the meaning of all this talk, anyhow? It's leaking out that you're going to revolutionize the business world with all this power-producing scheme of yours. Some crazy newspaper child got lit up the other day and printed a fake story about your plan of running wires from the river over to Chicago! Anything in that?—but of course there isn't."

"Not as you state it," said John Rawn. "We have a very desirable proposition, however, in our belief."

—"Say yes!" broke in the smaller man across the table. "But it looks like you've got the Ark of the Covenant concealed, you keep it so close. None of the stock seems to get out. You haven't listed anything, and nobody can guess within a million dollars what a share is worth."

"No," said John Rawn sententiously, "you couldn't. I couldn't, myself. I couldn't yet guess large enough."

"But they tell me it's reviving commerce all up and down the river—in the old towns."

Mr. Rawn nodded assentingly, smiling.

"Newspaper story was that there was going to be some fly-by-night, over-all, free-for-all *wireless* transmission, and all that! I say, that was deuced good market work, wasn't it! We all want in on that killing when it comes. But how are we going to get in on the killing if there isn't any stock to be had, and if it isn't listed so the public can be got in?"

"Standley and Ackerman got the lion's share," grumbled the large man, explanatorily.

"Did they?" smiled John Rawn, showing his teeth a trifle.

"Well, of course that's the talk—I don't know anything about how the facts are. But when the time comes, let us in."

"Certainly," said Rawn easily. "But we're not saying much just yet, of course. Just beginning."

"But now, *was* there anything in that crazy fool's newspaper story?"

"We're working on that idea," Rawn admitted, still smiling.

VII

They threw themselves back in their chairs and joined in a burst of laughter. "You're a wonder, Rawn!" said the large man admiringly.

The second cocktail had served to steady John Rawn. "Why?" he inquired evenly.

"Why, according to that story, every one of us manufacturers would be put out of business. We'd literally have to come and feed from your hand when we wanted power, according to that."

"It would figure that way on one basis," admitted Rawn. "That *would* be something, wouldn't it? Almost rather."

"Almost rather!" repeated the small man. "I say, that's pretty good, isn't it? Well now, I'll tell you what; we'd almost rather you'd let us in on the ground floor, m'friend! No more coal bills, no more walking delegates, no more strikes, no more Roosevelt 'n LaFol't! Just touch button. Too bad, Rawn, you didn't go into fiction yourself—it must have been you 'nvented that newspaper story, o' course."

"You have another guess," said John Rawn. "But you haven't guessed big enough yet. I told you, I myself couldn't guess big enough."

The large man laughed, reached into his pocket and handed out a bunch of keys. "Take 'em along," said he. "I might as well give you the key to my office, also to my home—and maybe one or two others." Some smiled at this last remark.

"My keys against yours," said John Rawn keenly. "You can take everything I've got if the time doesn't come when our company will do everything you're

laughing at now. But we're not after our friends. Why couldn't we get together—and together get the public?"

"Fine! *Now* you converse," smiled the large man.

"I don't deny I've got an idea up my sleeve, and have had," continued Rawn. "I don't deny that we may make some tremendous changes in business methods. When you tell me we can't do these things, that my idea won't make good, and all that, why, you almost make me talk. Not that I'm a talking man. But International Power isn't after its friends.

"But I'm just starting home now," he concluded. "I only dropped in for a moment. We're just getting things begun and I'm rushed day and night. I'm rather a new man here in town as yet. But I'll see you often."

"The central offices will be here, then?" inquired the large man.

"Yes, our main headquarters will be here for a time."

"Oh, joy! I'll drop in some time and have you do me up a choice line of philosopher's stones, so that I can turn things into gold. Why pay rent?" The large man laughed largely.

"Oh, all right," rejoined Rawn, also laughing. "But our invention is not so very wonderful. The only wonder is, that it hasn't been thought of before. Nothing is wonderful, you know."

"By Jove! I'm just going to come in with you there," assented the last speaker, suddenly sitting up in his chair. "There isn't anything stranger in the world than things that happen right along, every day. Look here."

He pulled out of his waistcoat pocket some blue strips of paper. "Tickets to the Aviation Meet. Fifty-cent gate. What do you see? Why, you see men doing what men couldn't have been supposed to do a little while ago. It's easy now—and they do that—they really fly. I tell you, fellows, when you get about four drinks in you and begin to think, this ain't just the world our daddies knew; and if it ain't, what sort of world is it going to be that our sons will know?"

"Precisely," assented John Rawn, with affability. "For instance, I'm going out now to take my car home. Nobody wonders at that. What would we all have thought of such speed ten or twelve years ago? Speed, gentlemen, speed—and power! The man who has those has got the world in the hollow of his hand." With a nod, half negligent, he turned away.

VIII

"*Ave Cæsar!*" irreverently remarked a man with a gray mustache as Rawn passed toward the cloak room.

"He sets me thinking, just the same," commented the large man grumblingly. "That fellow's a comer. He's building him a fine place, up the North Shore, they tell me. His family must have had money, though it's odd, I never heard of him till just lately. Who's going to pay for his house? Why, maybe *we* are!"

"Believe I'll go home for dinner to-night myself. Haven't been home for three days," yawned one.

—"And nights," added a smiling friend.

"Naturally. But let's have another little drink. I'm telling you, fellows, that fellow Rawn has got me guessing, too."

CHAPTER II

GRAYSTONE HALL

I

MR. Rawn's long and shiny car was waiting for him when he stepped with stately dignity down the broad stair of the National Union Club. His chauffeur once more touched his hat, as he saw the hat of Mr. Rawn, so much taller and shinier than his own.

Threading its path through the crowded traffic of the side streets, the car presently turned up the long northbound artery of the great western city. Surrounded by a large and somewhat vulgar throng of similarly large and shiny cars, it floated on, steadily, almost silently, until most of the noises and the odors of the city were left behind; until at last the blue of the great lake showed upon the right hand through ranks of thin and straggling trees, supported by a thin and sandy soil. Now appeared long rows of mansions, fronting on the lake, their amusingly narrow and inadequate grounds backing out upon the dusty roadway with its continual traffic of long, shiny and oftentimes vulgar cars. Miles of cars carried hundreds of men to miles of mansions. In less than an hour, from town to home, John Rawn also pulled up at the entrance to his home. Speed limits are not for such as Mr. Rawn.

This residence, yet another of these pretentious mansions, top-heavy on its inadequate delimitations, and done by one of the most ingenious architects to be found for money, was as new, as hideous, as barbarous as any that could be found in all that long assemblage of varied proofs of architectural aberrations. It was as new as Mr. Rawn himself. The brick walks were hardly yet firmly settled, the shrubs were not yet sure of root, the crocus rows in the borders still showed gaps. Large trees, transplanted bodily, still were sick at heart in their new surroundings. The gravel under the new *porte cochère* still was red and unweathered. As to the house itself, it combined Japanese, Colonial and Elizabethan architecture in nice modern proportions, the architect having been resolved to earn his fee. Many who passed that way turned and pointed approving thumbs at the residence of Mr. John Rawn, president of the International Power Company, a new man who had come in out of the West, and who evidently was possessed of wealth and taste.

II

Mr. Rawn knew that many occupants of other cars were noting him. His dignity was perfect as he left his car, not noticing that the chauffeur once more touched his hat. His dignity remained unbroken as he walked up the Elizabethan steps, flanked by Japanese jars, and paused at the Colonial door. The door swung open softly. His dignity was such that he scarcely saw the man who took his coat and hat, and who received no greeting from his master. Calm, cold and scornful, as one well used to such surroundings,

he passed through the long central halls and stood before the doubly glazed French window whose wide expanse fronted upon the lake. He came from inland parts, and he enjoyed this lake view he had bought. He did not hear the quiet footfall which approached over the heavy rug. Laura Rawn needed to speak to him the second time.

"Well," said he, turning and sighing, "how's everything?"

"Very well, John."

"Not so bad, eh?" He jerked a thumb to indicate the lake.

"It's grand!" said his wife, yet with no vast enthusiasm in her tone.

"I should say it was grand! Anyhow, there's nothing grander around Chicago. There's not very much here in the way of scenery. Of course, in New York—"

"Oh, don't let us talk of New York, John."

"Why?"

"I don't see how I could stand anything bigger or grander than this."

"Stand anything more? Ha-hum! Well, that's just about what I expected you to say, Laura. Sometimes I wonder if there ever was a man more handicapped than I am. Look at this! What have I done for you? Why, I changed your whole life for you, as much as though you'd died and been born into another world. You couldn't have had all this if it hadn't been for me. You don't enjoy it. You've got no use for it. I don't set even this for *my* limit. I've got ambition, and I'm going up as far as a man can go in this country. If that means New York, all right, when the time comes.

But what does my wife say? 'Oh, I couldn't stand that!' Stand it—why, I half believe, Laura, you wish you were back in Kelly Row right now—I believe that's right where you'd be this minute, if you had your choice."

"I would, John; if things could be the way they once were."

He only growled as he turned away petulantly.

"Of course I want to see you do well, get ahead, John, as far as ever you can go. And of course you'd never be happy to go back there again."

"Happy?—me—Kelly Row? You'd see John Rawn dead and buried first! I'd go jump in the lake if I thought I'd ever have to live again the way we used to."

"I wonder how they are doing back there now," said Mrs. Rawn, in spite of all, as though musing with herself. "It's evening now, and the men are just coming home from work. I wonder if Jane English, next door to us, has another baby this year. She always had, you know. And there's the young woman, Essie Hannigan, who always used to wait on the steps for her husband. And the dogs; and the babies in the street. And the little trees without very many leaves on them—why, John, I can see it all as plain as if it were right here. This house of ours here is so grand I can't understand it. How did we get it, John?—when we worked so long, so many years, and lived just like those others there? It all came at once. Have you earned all this—in a year or so? And how did you get it almost finished, before we moved up here, while we still were living in St. Louis—without either of us being here to watch the carpenters?"

"I did it with *money*, Laura, that's how. If you have money you can get anything done you want; and you don't have to do it with your own hands. But don't say 'carpenters'—it was an *architect* built this house."

"It cost a *lot* of money!"

"Not so much—I've not got in over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars yet, even with most of the furnishings in."

"You're always joking nowadays, John. Of course, you haven't made that much."

"Well, no; that's a lot of money to take out of the investments of a beginner. I had to get accommodation for three-fourths of it."

"Accommodation?—"

"Well, mortgage, then—that's what they'd call it in Texas or Kelly Row. I couldn't tie up all my capital—that isn't business. But what does it amount to? My salary is a hundred thousand a year; and I'm making more than that on the side. I didn't propose to come up here, president of the International Power Company, and go to living in a six-room flat. I wanted a *house*. You see." He swept a wide gesture again.

"It's not much like our little seven-room house in the brick block, is it, John?"

"And you wish you were back there? That's fine, isn't it? How can I do things for you if that's the way you feel? You've never got into the game with me, Laura,—you've never helped me; I've had to do it all. Yet look what I've done in the last two or three years!"

"Yes, John, I know I couldn't do much."

"You didn't do *anything*! You don't do *anything* now! You don't try to go forward, you never *aid* try,

you always hung back! You've always thought of your own selfish pleasure, Laura, and that's the trouble with you. A man busy all day with large matters, who comes home tired and worn out, looks for a little help when he gets home. What do I hear? 'I wish I was back in Kelly Row!' Fine, isn't it? I'll bet you a million dollars there isn't another woman in Chicago that would feel the way you do. You ought at least to have some sense of gratitude, it seems to me."

III

Grieved at the injustice of life, Mr. Rawn turned his troubled face and gazed out over the unexpressive expanse of water. Laura Rawn said nothing at the time, being a woman of large self-control. At length she laid a gentle hand upon her husband's shoulder.

"Why, John," said she, "I'd go to New York, if it was for the best. You ought to know that I have your interests at heart—really, you ought to know that, John. I don't want to hinder you, not the least in the world, John."

"But you *do* hinder me. You make me feel as though you were not in the game with me, that you were holding back all the time. I'm going a fast gait. I'm a rising man; but you ought to be in my company. A man doesn't like to feel that he's all alone in the world!"

"Why, John! Why, *John*!"

But he never caught the poignant anguish of her tone. "Why don't people come here to see you?" he demanded. "It's like a morgue. And by the time this

place is done it'll cost pretty near another quarter of a million."

"John!" she gasped. "Where will you get it?"

He turned and waved at her an aggressive finger. "I made it!" said he, "and I'll make it. I made a clean sixty-eight thousand dollars, to-day, with a turn of my wrist. I'll make the price of this house in another two years, if all goes well. When it starts, it comes fast. There's nothing grows like money. It rolls up like a snowball—for a few men; and I'm one of the few! It's easy picking for strong men in the business world of America to-day—the game's framed up for them, when they get in. And one of these days I'm going in further. We'll see a life which will make all this"—he swept a wide hand about him—"look like thirty cents." His pendulous lower lip trembled in emotion, precisely as might that of his father have trembled when he addressed assembled and unrepentant gatherings of sinners.

"Well, John," said Laura Rawn, dropping into a chair and crossing her hands in her lap, "you've done a lot for me, that's sure, more than I have had any right in the world to expect. I can't do much. I'm only going to try just all I can to keep up with you. But now let's not bother or worry any more about things. Supper is just about ready."

"Dinner, you mean. *Dinner*, Mrs. Rawn!"

She flushed a trifle. "As I meant, dinner, yes. You'll have time to dress for dinner, if you like, but I wish you wouldn't, John. I don't mean to. The truth is, I had the cook make to-night something you used to be very fond of in the old days—a pot roast—shoulder

of pork with cabbage. Somehow, it seemed to me that we wouldn't want to dress up just for that, John."

"My God, no!" The suffering John Rawn fell into a chair and dropped his face between his hands, shaking his head from side to side.

"Isn't it all right, John?" she asked anxiously. "What else should I get?"

"Leave it to the cook, Laura—I mean the chef. That's what he's *paid* for. Is there anything too good for us?"

"Not for you, John. But I sometimes think," she went on slowly after a while, "that I'm not entitled to so much as we have, when others have so little—the same sort of people that we once were. I don't understand it. I don't see where we *earned* it. Why, back there where we came from, life is very likely just as hard as it ever was."

"Haven't *earned* it!" gasped John Rawn—"I haven't *earned* it? Well, listen at that, to my face! Well, I'd like to ask you, Laura, if I haven't earned this, what man ever *did* earn his money?"

"Don't take me wrong, John dear. I was just wondering how *anybody* could ever earn so much."

"Well, don't get the habit of wondering."

"I like my things," said she softly, gazing about her. "I've always wanted nice things, of course. I never thought we'd have a place like this. Then the trees, and the lake—why, it's like fairyland to me!"

IV

But Rawn turned a discontented face around at the ill-assorted furnishings of Graystone Hall—as he had

named his quasi-country place. As in the case of the architect, the house decorator and furnisher had had full license, and each had done his worst.

"Somehow these things don't seem just the way they are down at the club!" he grumbled. "I've been at other houses along in here, once in a while, and somehow our things don't seem just like theirs. It's not my fault. Surely you must see how busy I am all the time—I've not got the time to take care of household matters, too."

He got up and took a turn or so about, gazing with dissatisfaction at his household goods. "They tell me that J. Pierpont Morgan picks up what they call collector's pieces. I've heard that lots of the big men have in their houses these collector's pieces. We've got to have some of them here. It won't do to have them say of us that we're anything back of Morgan or anybody else. If they think that of me, they don't know John Rawn."

"Dinner is served, Mrs. Rawn," said a low voice at the farther side of the room. The butler stood respectful, at attention.

"Mrs. Rawn!" grumbled the master of the place. "I'll train him different! Why don't he tell *me*?"

They passed into the wide dining-room, the butler now silently drawing together the double curtains which covered the windows fronting the lake. Rawn seated himself frowningly at the table, with the customary grumbling comment which he used to conceal his own lack of ease. In truth, he had never yet enjoyed a meal in his great house, and would at this moment have been far more comfortable in his shirt sleeves at the little table in Kelly Row, with the near-

est butler a thousand miles away for all of him. The presence of this shaven, priest-like personage behind him always sent a chill up his spine. He half jumped now as that icy individual coughed at his side, poured a little wine into his first glass, and passed on to Mrs. Rawn. Laura Rawn declined, as was her custom, and the butler turned to fill his master's glass.

"You ought to drink wine, Laura," said the owner of Graystone Hall, regardless of the butler's presence. "Practically all the women do, I notice. Some smoke—cigarettes, I mean; not a corn-cob pipe. But then—" he raised his own glass and drained it at a gulp. The butler filled it again, and passed silently in quest of the beginnings of the banquet whose *pièce de résistance* had caused him and the second maid to exchange wide grimaces of mirth beyond the door.

V

It could not have been called a wholly happy family gathering, this at Graystone Hall. Indeed, it lacked perhaps three generations, possibly three aeons, of being happy.

With little more speech after the evening meal than they had had before, an hour, perhaps, was passed in the room which the architect called the library, Mrs. Rawn called the parlor, and Mr. Rawn called the gold room. Then Laura Rawn, as was her wont, passed silently up-stairs to her own apartments—or her bedroom, as she called it—widely removed, in the architect's plans, from those of her husband. One room, one couch, had served for both in Kelly Row.

The gray lake throbbed along its shore. Night came

down and softened the ragged outlines of the scrawny trees which stood sentinels along the front of this pile of stone and steel and concrete and wood, which paid men had striven so hard to render into lines of homelikeness. A soft wind passed, sighing. The lights of Graystone Hall went out, one by one, while the evening still was young.

CHAPTER III

THE COMPETENCIES OF MISS DELAWARE

I

TWO-THIRDS of the inhabitants of this world live in that unreal atmosphere best described by the vulgar word of "bluff." About one-half the other third know that fact. The first two-thirds, not being able to determine which that latter half may be, exist in continual fear that they may guess wrongly in these vulgar fractions, and so make pretense where pretense is of no avail. Shoddy fears nothing so much as what vulgarly is called "the real thing;" but the trouble with shoddy, the anxiety, nay, the agony of shoddy, bluff, pretense, insincerity, whatever you care to call it, lies largely in the fact that shoddy can not always tell when it has been discovered to be shoddy.

There did not lack times in John Rawn's social life when he felt a very considerable trepidation regarding himself. He often looked at the tall mansion houses which he passed on his daily journey to and from his home, and wondered whether the occupants of some of them did not live a life of which he was ignorant. He wondered if, after all, there might not be something money could not buy.

For instance, in regard to those collector's pieces of which he had heard. How could they be distinguished

from other and less preferred articles of furnishing? Since he and his wife lacked judgment in such matters, what was the remedy? How could he set matters right without discovering his own ignorance? He was like an Indian, ashamed to learn.

II

Mr. Rawn was in an unusually abject mental state, one morning, some months after he had taken charge of the headquarters offices of the International Power Company. It was not often he had much recourse to spleen-venting beyond that of the disgruntled man, who most frequently takes it out on the minor office force. By this time he had learned his battery of buttons, and now he pressed one after the other, in order that he might express to the entire personnel of the office staff his personal belief of their unfitness to exist, let alone to execute business duties in a concern such as this.

He reserved one button for the last—the one farthest to the right upon his glass-topped desk. He knew what pressure upon that button would bring, and he felt a curious shrinking, a timidity, when he reflected upon that fact. He knew he could cause to stand before him a vision of calm, cool and somewhat superior femininity. In a few short months Mr. Rawn had learned to trust, to respect and to dread his assistant, Miss Virginia Delaware. In fact, it occurred to him at this very moment that she might perhaps be one of that half of the other third who can distinguish between pretense and the actual, between shoddy and the valid article,

Yet though this thought gave him a manner of chill, there was with it an attendant thought which caused him to glow with the joy of power. By simply dropping his finger, he, John Rawn, could summon into his presence the figure of a beautiful young woman—a woman not yet grown old and gray; a woman of personal charm; a woman calm, cool and superior. He stretched his own large limbs, glanced at his rugged frame, his somewhat lined face in the glass of the cloak-room door. He looked upon himself and saw that he was good; as God looked upon the world when He made it. He was of belief that a little gray hair at the temples was no such bar after all in a man's appearance.

III

Rawn had lived a life singularly clean and innocent. His youth had been gawky, his manhood ignorant. But now, somehow, somewhere, deep in some unsuspected corner of his nature, John Rawn felt glowing something heretofore unknown to him. He did not know what it was. At times it seemed to him he could see opening out before him a new world of wide and inviting expanses, a world of warmth and light and luxury and color; in short, a world as unlike Kelly Row as you may well imagine, inhabited by beings wholly different from those obtaining in Kelly Row. And there, among all these, one. . . . It is to be seen, in fact, that the life of the city began to open before John Rawn. The soul of the city is woman, as it was the soul of Rome. Rawn was learning what hitherto he had small opportunity to learn. At times he leaned back in luxurious realization of the fact that he, John

Rawn, late railway clerk, but born to the purple, could by a touch upon this certain plate of mother-of-pearl call before him in reality a vision which sometimes he saw within his mind.

John Rawn reached out and touched the last button to the right in the row. She appeared before him a moment later, silently, as calm, as cool, as unsmiling and as dignified as was her wont. Not even the quiver of an eyelid evinced concern as to what her next duty was to be.

IV

In appearance Virginia Delaware might have won approval from a closer critic than John Rawn. Her face really was almost classical in its lines, her poise and dignity now might have been that of some young, clean-limbed wood-goddess of old. She always seemed unfit for humdrum duties. Surely she had won the vast hatred of all her associates, who had experienced no raise of salaries whatever, under the new régime; whereas, it was well known that the president's secretary had had one, two, or perhaps several. These others detested all forward and superior persons; as was their irreverent and wholly logical right.

"We have some letters this morning, Miss Delaware," began Rawn. "You couldn't quite take care of them all, eh?"

"We handled all we could, Mr. Rawn. I have referred a large number to proper department heads, and answered quite a number. It seemed better to refer these for your own action."

"Business growing, eh?" said Rawn, turning around

to his desk. The girl's reply was just properly enthusiastic for the business:

"It's wonderful the mail we get. Inquiries come from all over the country. Yes, indeed, it seems to grow. The idea goes like wildfire. I never knew anything like it. When we really have the installations made, it will be only a question of administration."

Venturing nothing further, she seated herself at her table, book and pencil in hand, ready to begin. She did her work with a mechanical steadiness and lack of personality which might have classified her as indeed simply a cog in the vast machinery of the International Power Company. Rawn had gained facility in his own work, and had found in himself a real faculty for prompt decision and speedy handling of detail. He went on now smoothly, mechanically, rapidly, almost forgetful of everything but the series of problems before him, and forgetting each of these as quickly as he took up the other. He cast a look of unconscious admiration of the girl's efficiency when at last, finishing, he found her also finished with her part, and without having caused him delay or interruption. With no comment now, she took up the finished letters which had been left for his signature. Standing at his side, she literally fed them through the mill of his desk, taking away one signed sheet as she placed the other before him, smoothly, impersonally, swiftly. The work of the morning was beautiful in its mechanical aspect.

V

The business system of "International" was shaking down into a smooth and easy-running efficiency. At

the close of this work, Miss Delaware remained wholly unruffled. Turning toward her at last, John Rawn felt that curious old feeling, half made up of chilling trepidation, half of something quite different. There seemed to be something upon his mind, some business still unfinished.

"I was about to say, Miss Delaware," he began at length, "that I am, as you know, a very busy man."

"Yes, sir," she said, evenly and impersonally.

"I have so many things to do, you see, that I don't get much time to attend to little things outside of my business. A man's business is a millstone around his neck, Miss Delaware. We men of—ahem!—of affairs are little better than slaves."

"Yes, Mr. Rawn," she said gently. "I can understand that."

"For instance, I don't even know, as long as I have been here in Chicago, the names of the best firms of decorators, house furnishers, that sort of thing—"

"Doesn't Mrs. Rawn get about very much, sir?"

"Mrs. Rawn unfortunately is not very well. Also she has the habit of delaying in such matters. Then, as I don't myself have the time to take care of everything—why, you see—"

Her eyebrows were a trifle raised by now.

"—So I was just wondering whether I couldn't avail myself of your—your—very possible knowledge of these stores—shops, I mean."

"Oh, very well. Yes, sir. But I don't quite understand—"

"Well, I want to pick up some collector's pieces for my home, you see."

"Good pieces? Yes, sir. Of what sort?"

"Why, furniture—or—yes—some china stuff, I suppose. Maybe—er—some pictures."

"I see. You've not quite finished the decorations of your new home, Graystone Hall."

"Oh, you know the place?"

"Every one knows it, Mr. Rawn. It is very beautiful."

"It ought to be beautiful inside and out. To be brief about it, I know I oughtn't to ask an assistant who is only receiving forty-five dollars a week salary to act as expert for me in house decoration matters—that's entirely outside your business, Miss Delaware. At the same time—" Miss Delaware checked herself just in time not to mention the salary figure which Mr. Rawn had stated. If her oval cheek flushed a trifle, her long lashes did not flicker. This was ten dollars a week more. She had herself never once mentioned the matter of salary.

VI

"Of course, Mr. Rawn, I'd be willing to do anything I could," she said. "I know the city pretty well, having lived here for some time. If you would rather have me use my time in that way, it would be a great pleasure. I like nice things myself, though of course I could never have them. I've just had to flatten my nose against the window-pane!" She laughed, a low and even little burst of laughter, rippling; the most personal thing she ever had been guilty of doing in the office—then checked herself, colored, and resumed her perfect calm.

"Never mind about your other duties. Take any

time you like. Go see what you can *find* me in this town."

"As in what particular?"

"Well, take china. I shouldn't mind having some ornamental jars, vases—that sort of thing, you know."

"China's difficult, Mr. Rawn—one of the most difficult things into which one can go. There's a terrible range in it, you see. It can be cheap or very expensive, very grotesque or very beautiful. There are not many who know china. I suppose we mean porcelains?"

"Yes, I know. But what would you suggest, for instance, for my large central room, which opens out upon the lake?"

"What is the color scheme, Mr. Rawn?"

"About everything the confounded builders and decorators could think of," said Rawn frankly. "I think they called it a gray-and-silver motive. I know there's something in white, with dark red for the doors and facings."

Miss Delaware sat for a moment, a pencil against her lip, engaged in thought.

"Well," said she at length, "I'm sure almost any of the good houses would send you up what you liked. There's everything in accord. You don't want anything that will 'swear,' as the phrase goes. If I were in your place, I would select a few really good pieces, and try them in place, in the rooms."

"Yes, yes! But where'll I get them? How will I find them? That's why—"

"Mr. Rawn, there is really only one good selection in Oriental porcelains in town to-day. The large shops have their art rooms, of course, but they're horrible,

for the most part, although most of our 'best people' buy there—because they're fashionable. There's a little man on —— street. I just happened to see the things in his window as I went by one day. He has some beautiful pieces."

"And beautiful prices?"

"Much higher than you would need to pay at any of the larger places, because these are genuine. None of them ever had such pieces as these—they wouldn't know them when they saw them. You must remember, Mr. Rawn, that if a piece of porcelain were only worth two dollars a thousand years ago, and it was one, say, of a thousand others just like it at that time, the loss by breakage of the other duplicates, and the lowest kind of compound interest from then till now, would warrant almost any sort of price you'd care to put on a real work of art—one that has come down from so long a time ago."

"You've got a good business head! You know the value of interest, and few women do. Now, all I want to know is, that I'm not being done. I don't so much care about the price. But has this man anything in the real goods, and if so, what would you suggest?"

VII

Miss Delaware's answer might have proved a trifle disconcerting, even to one more critically versed than her employer. "In my own taste, Mr. Rawn," she said judicially, "there is nothing in the world so beautiful as some of the old Chinese monochromes. They come sometimes in the most beautiful pale colors. There is the *claire de lune*, for instance—this little

man has some perfectly wonderful specimens, three or four, I think; one good-sized jar. These pale blues grow on you. They don't seem so absolutely stunning at first, but they'll go *anywhere*; and they are beyond reproach in decoration. The pieces I saw are of the Sung dynasty; so they can't have been made later than 1300. They came from U-Chon, in the Honan province. I thought them very fine, and from my acquaintance with porcelains, I believe them to be genuine pieces."

"I know," said Rawn—he was perspiring rather freely—"But I confess I never was very much in love with Chinese art."

"But we owe so *much* to it, Mr. Rawn," she said with gentle enthusiasm. "We learned all we know of underglaze and overglaze from the Chinese—the best of our old English china was not made in England, but imported from the Orient, as you know. Chippendale got many of his own ideas in furniture decorations from the Chinese, and so did the French—why, you'll see Parisian bronzes, ever so old, and you couldn't tell whether they were made in France or China. And *old*! The man at this little shop has one piece which he says certainly was made before the Christian era. If I were in your place, however, I would adhere, say, to the Ming dynasty. Then you'll get as low as 1644."

"You mean apiece?"

"Oh, no, sir," she said gently, not smiling at his mistake. "I mean, the Ming dynasty ended in the *year* 1644."

"Of course—you didn't understand me." Mr. Rawn perspired yet more.

VIII

"No—well, at least you'll find some good jars and vases of that period," continued Miss Delaware. "For instance, the Ching period of that dynasty is very rich in the *famille-verte*, as the French describe it—some splendid apple-greens can be had in this. Then there's one piece of that same period, I believe, of the *famille-rose*. It's a wonderful thing in egg shell porcelain, and I don't believe its like can be found to-day in all the Lake Shore Drive—or even Drexel Boulevard; and say what you like, Mr. Rawn, there *are* fanciers there! In colors there is nothing to equal some of these fine old pieces. I wouldn't, of course, suggest the bizarre and striking ones, but I'd keep down to the quiet and solid colors, of some of the old and estimable periods. I don't know much about art, of course, but I've just happened to study a little bit into the old porcelains. I'd like to buy a few—for *somebody*! I couldn't go very far myself—when they come at a couple of thousand dollars apiece, for some of the better examples!"

Rawn did not lack in gameness, and no muscle in his face changed as he nodded.

"The main thing is not to make the wrong selection, Miss Delaware," said he. "I wish you'd go around there to-morrow, if you find time, and see if this man will not send up four or five of his better pieces. I'll pass on them then."

"You may be sure of one thing, Mr. Rawn," said Miss Delaware, nodding with emphasis, "they will be real collector's pieces, and any one who knows about them will see what they are worth."

"All right, then. You'll be saving me a lot of time if you'll take care of that, Miss Delaware. Now an-

other thing. As I told you, Mrs. Rawn is ill a great deal of the time. I want to make her a little present—she must have—that is to say, I am desirous of sending her, for her birthday, you know, something like a ring or a pendant, in good stones. Could you drop in at Jansen's and have their man bring me over something this afternoon—I'll not have time to get out, I fear."

"Certainly, Mr. Rawn. I'll be very glad, if I can be spared from the office."

"That's all, Miss Delaware."

She passed out gently, impersonally. Rawn found himself looking at the door where she had vanished.

IX

It was perhaps an hour later that he re-opened the door himself in answer to a knock. Miss Delaware stood respectfully waiting. "There is a man from Jansen's waiting for you, Mr. Rawn," said she.

"Tell him to come in," said Rawn. There rose from a near-by seat a gray-haired, grave and slender man, of sad demeanor, who presently removed from his pocket and spread out upon the glass top of John Rawn's desk such display of gems as set the whole room aquiver with light. Rawn felt his own eyes shine, his own soul leap. There always was something in diamonds which spoke to him.

"Ah-hum!" said he, feigning indifference, "some pretty good ones, eh?" He poked around among them with the end of his penholder, as the gray and grave man quietly opened one paper package after another, and exposed his wares.

John Rawn reached out and pushed the button far-

thrust to the right in the long row on his desk. Miss Delaware came and stood quietly awaiting his command.

Her eyes caught, in the next moment, the shimmering radiance which now flamed on the desk top, as Rawn poked around among the gems that lay under the beams of the westering sun which came through the window. Rawn turned quickly. He thought he had heard a sigh, a sob.

Something in the soul of Virginia Delaware leaped! For the first time her eyes shone with brighter fire; for the first time she half-gasped in actual emotion. There was something in diamonds which spoke to her also!

"Essence of power!" said John Rawn calmly, poking among the gems. The girl did not answer. The salesman coughed gently: "I should say a hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth there, Mr. Rawn," said he respectfully.

The man whom he addressed turned to the girl who stood there, her eyes dilated. He half smiled. "They're lovely!" said Virginia Delaware, in spite of herself, and now unmasked. "Absolutely lovely! I love them!"

"Pick out two things there," said John Rawn sententiously, pushing himself back from the desk. "I should say this pendant. Take a guess at the rings. What would Mrs. Rawn like; and what would about suit Mrs. Rawn?"

She bent above the desk, her eyes aflame at the sight of the brilliance that lay before her. Something laughed up at her, spoke to her. Her bosom heaved a bit.

"I should say your choice is excellent, Mr. Rawn,"

said she at length, gently, controlling herself. "The pendant is beautiful, set with the emeralds. See that chain in platinum—it is a dear! It's like a thread of moonlight, isn't it? And as for the rings, I'd take this one, I believe, with the two steel-blue stones."

"How much?" said John Rawn, turning to the grave and gray salesman.

"The two pieces would cost you twenty-eight thousand dollars, sir," the latter replied, gravely and impersonally.

"Miss Delaware," said John Rawn, taking from his pocket his personal check book, "oblige me by making out a check for that amount. Bring it in to me directly—and have the boy call my car."

X

When John Rawn ascended the steps of his mansion house that night, he fairly throbbed with the sense of his own self-approval. There was that in his pocket which, he thought, when worn by the wife of John Rawn at any public place of display, would indicate what grade of life he, John Rawn, had shown himself fit to occupy. He lost no time in summoning his wife, and with small adieu put in her extended hand the little mass of trembling, shivering gems. She gazed at them almost stupefied.

"Well, well!" he broke out, "can't you say anything? What about it? They're yours."

"Oh, John!" she began. "John! What do you mean? How could you—how could I—"

He flung out his hand in a gesture of despair. "Oh, there you go again! Can't you fall into line at *all*?"

pity.

"My own wife won't wear my diamonds," said he. "This, for a man as ambitious as I am, and a man who has done as much as I have!"

She came now and put her arms about his neck, the first time in years; but not in thankfulness. She looked straight into his eyes. "John!" she said. "Oh, *John!*" There was all of woman's anguish in her eyes, in her voice.

CHAPTER IV

AT HEADQUARTERS

I

THE International Power Company remained a puzzle in suspended animation before the business world. Its campaign, whatever it was, went on behind closed doors and closed mouths. The men who were backing John Rawn were doing so with daring and courage, yet with business discretion and business eagerness for results. There was no leak anywhere, but the capitalists who were showing their faith in the basic idea of the company began to grow impatient because of the slow advancement of the most important of their plans; those bearing on wireless transmission from the central generating station on the Mississippi River.

Rawn's duties at the central offices, as president of the company, although steadily increasing, were still to very large extent perfunctory matters of routine; but the president's office evinced very early a singular efficiency in executive affairs. Rawn's directors looked on him with mingled approval and cautiousness, coming almost to the belief that, if the progress of the central distributing plant, or "Wireless No. 1," as it was known in the company's literature, did not

seem all it should be, at least the president of the company was not to blame therefor. They turned to the department of mechanical installation; which brought Charles Halsey under investigation.

II

Halsey and his wife, John Rawn's daughter, had taken up their residence in the small Chicago suburb in which the central plant had been located. Their cottage was a small one, and it was furnished much like other cottages thereabout, occupied by salaried men, mechanics, persons of no great means. It retained something of the complexion of the old quarters in Kelly Row. The furniture was of imitation mahogany, the pictures had been, for the most part, bought by mail, the decorations were a jumble of inharmonious inadvertencies. The two young folk, their means as small as their tastes were undeveloped, gave themselves small concern over architects' plans and "collectors' pieces." They were busy as are most young couples in the delights of their first experiment in housekeeping; and Halsey himself now was deep in the strong and somber delight of developing a beloved idea.

Naturally, Halsey was often taken to the central offices in the city for conferences with the president of the company. He frequently met there Virginia Delaware, even at times gave dictation to her—a thing he never failed to remember, but never remembered to mention in his own home. As do many men even in this divorceful age, he set aside comparisons, forced himself into loyalty. Moreover, he yet was very young in mar-

ried life, and always had lived in an atmosphere where man, married or single, coveted not that which was his neighbor's. It was but unconsciously, as though moved only by force of gravitation, that he drifted to Miss Delaware with his correspondence. He said to himself that it was because she was so efficient. Yes, that was it, of course, he assured himself, frowning when, once upon a time, he detected a flush on his face in answer to a sudden question of his soul. Thereafter he went not infrequently to the general offices.

III

On one such occasion he found himself in the position known among salaried workers as being "called upon the carpet" before "the old man." Rawn held a letter in his hand to which he referred as he chided Halsey for the delays in his department of the work.

"Do you suppose I can stand for this sort of thing coming from New York?" he began. "What's the matter out there with you?"

"Just what we might expect," Halsey replied coolly. "I've tried to cut down the expenses, but the men won't take the cut in wages."

"Why won't they?"

Halsey smiled. "They have a hundred answers for that. One is, that they can't live on the wages, and another is, that they want the union scale."

"They'll never unionize our factory, Mr. Halsey! If they did, we might as well throw away all our money and tell them our secret at the start—we'd be working for them, not they for us."

"That's all right, sir. I think, myself, an open shop

is safer for us. But the unions make all sorts of disturbances. I can't keep on a steady crew; and unless I do, I have to start in and educate a new set of men every week, or every day; and I have to be careful what I let any of them know. I can't help it, Mr. Rawn."

"Well, we'll *have* to help it, that's all," Rawn retorted grimly. "If the unions want fight they can have fight, until we get to the place where we can take all the fight out of them. These laboring men want to stop the whole progress of this country—they're a drag on the industry of this country, a continuous tax on all consumers. I'll show them! Once we get those motors installed, I'll make them *crawl*."

IV

"And yet, do you know, Charles," he went on a little later, his voice almost trembling, "the *injustice* of this conduct is what cuts me. I've had it in my mind to *do* something for the laboring men of this country. Of course, I've seen all along that the general introduction of our motors into all sorts of industrial uses would throw hundreds and thousands of laboring men out of employment—put them on the scrap heap permanently. What are they going to do then? Some one's got to feed them just the same, as you once said to me, long ago. You talk about problems!—Why, we haven't got to the great ones in this country yet. The cost of living certainly will climb when that day comes. And the scale of wages will go down, when we abolish the man who has only muscle to sell. How are they going to eat?

"Now, I've foreseen something of this, and planned for it. These people can't plan for themselves, and it's always got to be some stronger mind that does the thinking. You know, I was born in Texas. I've always resolved to do something for that state; and, as I've just told you, I've always had it in mind to do something for the laboring man—that is to say, the man who sees himself just as he really is, and who doesn't rate himself worth just the same as the fellow next door to him, so much and no more.

"I've had my eye for some time on a tract of land down in Texas, forty thousand acres. It shall never be said of John Rawn that he forgot either his state or his fellow-man in the time of his success. When we get our motors going here—it will be, of course, a few years before the full effect of it all is felt—why then I'm going to colonize hundreds of these discarded workmen on this land in Texas. They can put in their labor there, where it will be useful, and can produce a living for themselves and a surplus for others. In short, it has been my plan to put them where they could continue to be useful to society. I wouldn't want to see them *starve!*" Mr. Rawn's lip quivered at this thought. He felt himself to be a very tender-hearted man.

V

"Yes," said Halsey grimly, "the Czar of Russia had some such notion regarding the serfs. Yet he freed them eventually."

"Nonsense! They'll be not in the least serfs, but will simply be men transferred by a higher intelligence to a plane of life which otherwise they could not reach

—a plane where they can be of use not only to themselves but to others.”

“You’re always talking, my son,” went on Rawn, harshly, “about helping your fellow-man, loving him like a brother—human equality, and all that sort of rot. What have any of *you* ever really done for each other, I’d like to know, except to meet up there in garrets, with lanterns hanging around, and discuss plans for taking away from stronger men the property they have accumulated? Now, I’m not going to take it out in *talk*—I’m going to *do* something for these people. I’m going to make Texas the place for my colony, because I don’t want to deprive my native state of the credit of producing a man who had two big ideas—cheap power, and common sense in labor. There’s two *big* ideas.”

“I wouldn’t dare tell the men anything of that,” was Halsey’s comment. “It’s hard enough as it is.”

“No, certainly not. We’ll just go on and take our chances with these men; and they take their chances with us. You have my instructions to discharge any man who kicks on the wage cut, if he doesn’t fire himself. The town’s full of men with families, who aren’t earning enough to eat. You can get all the help you want. Tell them we’re open shop, and if they don’t like it they can do their worst. Let them bring on their dynamite, if they want to try that—they can have all the fight they want; and I’ll stay with it until I see them *crawl*.”

“There’s something I don’t understand about it, Mr. Rawn. The men are very sullen. The foremen tell me that they never had so much trouble. Of course, they don’t understand it themselves, but it’s

just as though our secret was getting out, and as if the men were afraid of cutting their own throats when they build these machines. Not that they understand what it's all about—it's air tight yet, that's sure."

"You begin to see some of the practical results of your infernal socialistic ideas, don't you, then? You'll come to my notion of life after a while."

"Mr. Rawn, what's the end of that? What's the logical conclusion?"

"Well, I'll *tell* you! One end and logical conclusion is going to be that I'll get some one to handle that factory if you can't; and he'll handle it the way I tell him!"

"You want my resignation now?"

"I'd very likely take it if it weren't for Grace. Besides, we've started on this thing together; and moreover again, I want you, when I go to New York, to see the directors and explain to them that their impatience is all wrong."

"Is there much dissatisfaction down there?"

"Yes. We've both got to run down East to-morrow night. Go on out now, and reserve four compartments on the limited."

"Four?"

"Yes—we'll want a place to eat and work on the road. I've got to take a stenographer along, of course. Next year I'll have a car of my own."

VI

Halsey cast a quick glance at him, but still hesitated. "I don't see how I can well leave Grace right now," said he. "It's near her time."

"You both take your chances about that," growled Rawn. "Business enterprises have to be born, as well as children. The important things come first. The one important thing for you and me is to get down there and see those cold-footed Easterners and tell them where they get off in this business."

"Say three days—maybe I can get back in time, Mr. Rawn. But I must say that they're asking us both to show a good deal of loyalty to this company."

"It's the only way to get success—fidelity to your employers, no matter what comes. Of course, I know how you feel, but business can't wait on women."

"A woman doesn't always understand about business, Mr. Rawn. They're rather strange things, don't you think? Grace doesn't talk much to me—she never has. Sometimes—"

Rawn raised a hand. "Charles, never let me hear a word of doubt or disloyalty regarding your wife! No daughter of Grace's parents could be anything but faithful and worthy. You should return such loyalty with love. Never let anything shake you out of your duty to your own wife—my girl Grace."

"Why do you say that? We're married, and we're happy—and as you know—"

"Very well. I like to hear you speak in that way. Always be gentle and kind to your wife. Of course, marriage may not seem always as it was in the honeymoon days, my son."

"That's true," said Halsey suddenly. "Do you know, I've thought that."

"What *right* had you to think it?"

"Mr. Rawn, Grace is my wife and I love her. But I'll confess the truth to you—she acts as though we'd

been married forty years. She runs the house well, but she—I can't explain to you what I mean. She doesn't seem *contented* any more. Of course, she loves me, and of course I love her, and we're married, and all that; and then—"

"Charles, you surprise and grieve me. Grace is my daughter. She may have self-respect and dignity, but she will never lack in dutifulness. Did you ever stop to think, Charles, that you owe your place in life to her?"

"I wasn't thinking of business, Mr. Rawn, and if you please, we'll not discuss that. I only spoke freely because of what we both know—in fact, I'd rather stay home than go to New York with you. If you took along your assistant—Miss Delaware, I suppose?"

Rawn nodded. "Yes, she has the details of the sub-companies well in hand. I want her along, just as I want you, so that all questions can be answered as to details of the office and factory work, in case I should not personally be familiar with them—as I think I am, for the most part."

"Then you couldn't use the stenographer on the train—I mean the regular one?"

"I could not, Mr. Halsey," said John Rawn icily. "What business is it of *yours*?"

"None in the least. I was only thinking about any possible talk. She's a very beautiful girl, and very—stunning. Yes, on the whole, Mr. Rawn, I think it better for me to go. One day in New York ought to do us, ought it not?"

Rawn nodded. "Yes, we'll be back here on the fourth day, at worst. I've got to have you down there to explain the different installations. I am as impa-

tient as anybody else. I want to get to the place where I'll be making some real money."

"I thought you had been," grinned Halsey. "Your house, for instance?"

"Over a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in there now, and as much more to go in later," said Rawn. "I've spent over a half million altogether, private, overheads and investments, since I went in with this company. My salary is only a hundred thousand, and no man ever lives on his salary and lays up any money—he's got to make his start on the side. I've not done badly in that way. I'm learning the market from the inside. I've had one killing after another—Oil, Rubber—awfully good luck. Charles, the next ten years in all likelihood will see me a rich man, very rich. I've not done badly now, for the son of a Methodist preacher out of a little Texas town. Let me tell you something. Money is easy to make when you get the start. It rolls, I tell you, it rolls up like a snowball. It grows and spreads—there's nothing like it in its power. It's power itself!"

VII

Rawn rose, soon pausing in his excited walk, in his wonted posture, feet apart, hands under his coat tails. Halsey looked at him, frowning half sullenly, as he went on.

"Ah, Charles, there's nothing like money as an ambition for a man! When I hear you talking your folly, about this brotherhood of man—when I see you worrying your small head about the future of this republic, you make me smile! What difference about the rest of the world if you take care of *yourself*? There's

one brotherhood that's worth while, and only one, and it isn't that of laboring men, of common men—it is the brotherhood of big men who have made big money. There's a union for you, son! It does not break, it does not snitch, it does not strike. It sticks, it hangs together—the union of big business men is the only one worth while. Come with me, and I'll show you some proof of that.”

Halsey looked at him, his eyes glittering, words of scorn rising to his tongue; but he controlled himself. “All right, Mr. Rawn,” said he, “I'll be ready to start to-morrow, and I'll count on getting back here by the last of the week, at least. Good day, sir.”

He left the room quietly. He was a handsome, stalwart young man, but in some way his face did not look happy. Rawn sat staring at the door through which he had disappeared. There came over his feelings some sort of vague dissatisfaction or apprehension, he knew not what.

“I'm scared at something, just like those laborers,” said he; “and when there's no reason in the world, so far as any one can tell. Pshaw!”

VIII

He flung himself around to his place at his desk, and in doing so struck his hand against the pointed letter-opener which lay there. A tiny trickle of blood appeared, which he sought to staunch with his handkerchief. At last he raised his head with a grin, and remarked half aloud, to himself, “When in doubt, touch the right-hand button!”

“Miss Delaware,” said he an instant later, as his

assistant appeared, "I've cut my hand a little. I wish you'd tell one of the boys to bring me a basin of hot water, or some sticking plaster or something."

"If you will allow me, Mr. Rawn," she answered respectfully, "I think I could fix that without trouble. I have a little liquid ether and collodion in my desk. It usually will stop any small cut, and it keeps it clean."

"All right," said Rawn, "anything to stop the bleeding—I must get to work."

She reappeared a moment later with a small bottle and a pencil brush, and bending over, proceeded to touch the tiny wound with the biting liquid, with a slight "Tch!" as she saw the hand wince under the temporary sting. Rawn looked at her with a singular expression.

"It's odd, Miss Delaware," said he, "that I was just saying to myself a minute ago that I'd bet a thousand dollars you had something ready, at just the right time! Thank you very much.

"By the way," he added, "I was just telling my son-in-law, Mr. Halsey, the superintendent of our works, that it's going to be necessary for all three of us—that is to say, myself, Mr. Halsey and you—to start for New York to-morrow afternoon. I'll probably have to do some letters on the train, and you would better see that a typewriter is sent on—Mr. Halsey will give us the berth numbers in the morning, I suppose. Sorry to take you out of your work, but then—"

"I should like to go, above all things, Mr. Rawn," replied the young woman, still respectfully.

"All right. Of course, you go on company account. Maybe you'll like the change of work and scene. Please bring along all the reports on those Lower Valley instalments, and all the estimates we've been working on here for the last few days. It might be a good plan to have your files for the last month go along, with your card indexes. We've got to show those people down there a thing or two.

"I suppose you know our superintendent, Mr. Halsey—my son-in-law," he added. "He's going, too."

"Oh, yes. He's here often. Sometimes I've done work for him, you know. He does a good, clear letter—but rather long. He can't get through so much in an hour as you can, Mr. Rawn."

When she had retired, Rawn was seized with an impulsive desire to raise his secretary's salary again; but he reflected that it would hardly do—although he was convinced that he had the most efficient assistant on the Street. He did not know she was thinking of Halsey at that moment.

Singularly enough, Charles Halsey was thinking of Miss Delaware at about that same time. He was saying to himself, as he passed into the hall after nodding to her: "By George, isn't she efficient!" Practically all the male clerks would have agreed with him had they heard him. With equal strenuousness, all the female clerks would have dissented. After he had said to himself that Miss Delaware was efficient, Halsey checked himself on the point of adding that she was also something besides efficient. He stopped the thought so sharply that it stopped his stride as well. There came to his mind the picture of his wife, now

soon to enter into woman's valley of the shadows. He paused, obliging his soul to render to his wife all honor, all homage, all loyalty, all duty—indeed, all those things which a wife will trade *en masse* for just a little real spontaneous love.

CHAPTER V

THEIR MASTER'S VOICE

I

"**T**HAT may all be very well," commented one of the members at the directors' meeting of the International Power Company, held on the day of Rawn's arrival in New York; "that may all be true, but what do we know about the practical application? I've heard of extracting gold from sea water—and the fellow proved it right before your eyes! The world is full of these things, getting rich all at once, but usually when we get to the bottom of it, there's the same old gold brick."

The speaker was rather a slight man, with dark pointed beard, a man whose name swayed railway fortunes, but whose digestion was not worth mentioning. Silence greeted his comment. A dozen pairs of eyes turned toward John Rawn from different points about the long directors' table. The speaker went on:

"I am ready to back anything I believe in, of course, and I must say I believed in this—maybe because I wanted to, it looked so good. It's the pinkest, prettiest, sweetest scheme I ever saw, and that's the fact. But we don't *get* anywhere with it. We've been pouring money into these Chicago works, and there's nothing doing. We've been paying you a pretty stiff

salary, Mr. Rawn, and our total expenses have footed up enormously. We've got the work on the dam and on the central transmission plant to show, yes, but that's all. And that wasn't why I went into this thing. For one, I want to be shown a few things about the Chicago installations. It's that wireless receiver that's got us all into this, and I want to know about *that*."

John Rawn made characteristic answer: "How much is your stock worth, in your opinion, Van?" he demanded quietly.

"I'll just about call that bluff right here," broke out the dyspeptic financier. "I'll take sixty for all my holdings."

"How many shares?"

"I'm only in for three thousand."

"Push me that pen, Charles," commented John Rawn casually. "I'll make a memorandum of that," said he. "It's a sale. Will you please initial it? You shall have my check in due course."

The dyspeptic director hesitated for an instant. "Put up or shut up!" exclaimed John Rawn roughly. "I'm going to buy you out, and throw you out, right here. We don't want any cold-foot sitting here with us. This has got to be a bunch of fighting men, and we don't want any quitters."

"I'll not stand for that!" began the dyspeptic. "I want to say—"

"You'll say nothing, and you'll stand for that," retorted Rawn. "I'll get you the cash here in copper pennies if you like, inside of five minutes. O. K. that paper, and cancel your right to vote. The meeting isn't called to order yet, and the books are not closed."

"That's the talk!" growled a deep voice farther toward the end of the table. The general traffic man of earlier days, Ackerman, of St. Louis, was the speaker. "I'll take half of that myself, Rawn."

"Yes, and divide it with me, Ackerman," nodded Standley, the railway president to whom Rawn had first brought his device.

The dissatisfied director paled yet more. "Oh, well," said he, "if that's the way you feel about it, I'll just call your bluff. Here's my initials; and you're welcome to my stock."

"Record it!" said Rawn tersely, throwing the memorandum across to the treasurer. "Have you got the stock here?"

"Yes, right in my inside pocket," retorted the other savagely.

"Pass it to the treasurer, then, if you please—that is to say, if you will take the assurance of myself and these gentlemen that we'll take up this memorandum."

"Oh, of course I'll do that," assented the other grudgingly.

"Then that'll be about all," said Mr. Rawn. "And as this is to be a directors' meeting, why, maybe—"

The dyspeptic financier was already reaching for his hat and coat.

II

"I want *all* you gentlemen to feel," said John Rawn calmly, "that there's a chance to lay down right here, if your feet are getting cold. Better quit now than later on. I won't work with men who haven't got heart in this thing. If any of you are scared, let me know. I couldn't take over all your stock myself, of

course, but if you want to let go, I believe I can swing another company organization."

They looked at him silently, here and there a gray head shaking in negation. Rawn's eye lighted.

"That's the idea!" said he; "we'll all sit tight."

He turned to catch the eye of the late director, who was now passing toward the door. "I'm going," said the latter importantly.

"And good riddance!" said John Rawn calmly.

"I'll take care of you for that, one of these days, Mr. Rawn!"

"Why not now?"

"You'll see what I'll do to you in the market!"

"The market be damned!" said John Rawn evenly. "There isn't any market. There isn't anything to buy or sell. If there is any stock offered, I'm the market, right here and now. Go on and do what you can. The more you talk of what you don't know about, the more you'll boom this thing; so turn yourself loose, if you feel like it. I've got our superintendent here to prove this thing out—to the *directors* of this company, Mr. Van. The meeting is informal, but it may be instructive. We can fill any vacancy on the board at some other time, maybe."

A large, bearded man, with drooping lower eyelids, who sat across the table, chuckled to himself gently as the ex-director slammed the door.

"Well, then—" said a tentative voice.

All these men were men of large affairs. They would have spared no time for this meeting had it not seemed to them much worth their while.

"Van's going to talk," said one voice.

"Let him talk about what he likes," rejoined Rawn. "It's close communion for the rest of us. Well, then, have we all got cards?" he demanded.

There was a grim look on each face along the table which suited the fancy of the speaker. "All right, then," said he. "There are only two or three of you who ever saw our device actually at work. I've got my report all brought up to date. Mr. Halsey will tell you what he has been doing in the works, how he has been handicapped, why we can not turn over at once a completed installation of one of our motors. We know perfectly well that a great deal of money has been expended. We don't want you to put in that money unless you are satisfied of returns, big returns. Gentlemen, are you ready to see the gold brick? Would you like to look at the little joker, or see if you can find the pea under the shell? If so, there will be further opportunity for those who want to drop out. But I'd very much prefer you'd drop out now and not after our experiments."

There was no answer, beyond a growl from Ackerman, a twitched hand of the bearded man.

III

Halsey rose and placed on the table the little model which he took from the case at his side. In principle, it was the same which had been shown in the original demonstration at St. Louis, long before, although in workmanship it was in this instance a trifle more finished, showing more of shining brass and steel. Halsey looked about hesitatingly.

"Shall we use the fan again?" he inquired of Mr. Rawn.

"Not on your life!" cried out Ackerman. "No more fan bursting goes. You'll put on the little railway, here on the table, as you were showing me the other day."

"You gentlemen all know the general theory of the invention," Halsey went on, again assuming the post of lecturer, which Rawn once more graciously surrendered to him, waving a hand largely in his direction as though in explanation to the others. "It's simply the attuning of a motor to the free electrical current in the air—the wireless idea, of course. You're posted on all this. Now, I've got some little things here which will show some of the applications of our idea. We'll make a little track, for a railway train, and we'll run its motor here with current of our own, simply by our receiver for the free current.

"I've often thought of the applicability of our receivers to the use of automobiles. Any man could have one of these receivers in his own garage, and could charge his own machine as he liked. That's only one use of the idea. What is true regarding auto cars is true also of plows, wagons, nearly all farm machinery. One of these receivers which you could carry around under your arm would do the work of many men, of many horses. With this model here I can, as Mr. Ackerman and Mr. Standley will agree, burst that electric fan wide open, and with no wire attachment for any current whatever. And I think we can run this little train of cars."

A sigh went around the table at these calm words. These grave, gray men looked intently, bending for-

ward at the edge of the table as young Halsey completed his mechanical arrangements.

"If this thing works," said the large, bearded man, leaning forward, "where does it leave railway transportation?"

"It leaves it with us!" interrupted John Rawn. "With us absolutely!"

"What's to hinder anybody from building all the railroads they want, and making all the cars they want, and taking all the power they want out of the air, as you say?"

"Nothing in the world to prevent," said John Rawn, "except the solidarity of the railway men of this country. If we take you all in and if you all stand pat, what chance has any one else got, except through buying power of us? Of course, this thing would break us if used against us. But we don't propose to see it used that way. Our patents protect us."

"Go on," said the bearded man. "Let's see the wheels go 'round."

They saw as much, and more. Halsey's little car repeated its circuit about the long table again and again, tirelessly, operated by power taken from the unwired receiver. Where the receiver got its power Halsey explained in detail as he had done before.

The thing was there to show for itself. As to the breadth of its application, these men needed no advice. They were accustomed to the look ahead, to the weighing of wide possibilities.

"It's like the French conjurer, gentlemen," said John Rawn smiling. "He operates with his sleeves rolled up. 'There is no *déception*, by friends,' says he. There's the whole works on the table right be-

fore us. If it isn't a tremendous thing I'm the worst fooled man in all this world, and I'll be the worst broke man in the world."

"Toot! Toot!" remarked a jovial voice from Standley's end of the table. "Start her up again, son—I never get tired of seeing that thing go like the Chinaman's cable car." Levity was a relief to them. There is a certain strain, after all, in planning for the ownership of a people, a republic.

Halsey again pushed down the lever, and again the dummy car ran around and about the table on the curved track which had been laid for it.

"That's the travel of the future, gentlemen," said John Rawn soberly, at length. "They can take it or leave it. So can you."

IV

Silence fell on that group of gray, grave men. The thing seemed to them uncanny, although so simple. They looked about, one at the other. A sort of sigh passed about the room. There sat at the table men who represented untold millions of capital. They were looking upon a device which in the belief of all was about to multiply these millions many-fold. Their hands already inordinately full of power, they contemplated yet more inordinate power. They sat fascinated, silent, sighing at the prospect, in a delicious half-delirium. The forehead or the upper lip of each was moist.

"You can't get away from it, fellows," said Standley, of St. Louis. "I've tried to, my best, and I can't. I felt just the way you do when it was first put up to me—I didn't want to face the truth, it was so big. As

grip on this country which couldn't be shaken off by any political or industrial changes. That's just what I'm offering you here, gentlemen. Pretty much the whole business world will be yours. *I brought you this, didn't I?* Now, do you want a nice gold fence around the world with diamond tips to the pickets; or what is it that you do want? Up to this time you've wanted what was impossible. Now I've shown you that the impossible *is* possible. Here it is, on the table in front of you—here's the proof. Unless I am drunk or crazy, the future governors of the United States of America are sitting right here at this table."

He touched the glass top lightly, gently, with his finger-tips, which had no tremor in them. John Rawn was completely master of himself.

v

"But it *has* cost a lot of money, Rawn," began one director hesitatingly.

"That's a relative term," answered Rawn. "I have all the details here among my figures. It is much or little, as you care to look at it—it doesn't seem much to me. We've run this thing down to rock-bed economy all the time. We cut our men a dollar a week last month, and it started a riot. We're trying to save all the money we can, of course—it's my money that is being spent just the same as yours, my time that is wasting, just the same as yours. I'm as eager as you to get my hands on this thing, and to get its hands on this country. But there's such a thing as losing by lack of confidence, and many and many a good

thing has been lost by lack of money backed by nerve. What do you want, gentlemen? I can't do much more than I have done."

"And it's enough!" cried the bearded man, his voice harsh, strident with his emotion. "We've got to have it! Let's stick, let's stick, fellows! They'll never shake us off. There is absolutely no limit to this thing."

"Is that still the way you feel, Jim?" asked Standley from his end of the table.

"Yes, it is; how about it, gentlemen?" answered Ackerman's deep voice.

His eyes turned from one to the other, and found no dissent, although the air of each man was earnest, almost somber.

"Shake hands, then!" called out the bearded man with enthusiasm, a man who had swayed millions by the force of his own convictions before that time.

"Let's all shake hands, then, gentlemen," said John Rawn.

They did so, each man reaching out his hands to his neighbor; Halsey, of course, stepping back as not belonging to that charmed circle. They made a ring around that table of countless, untold millions, of uncounted, unmeasured power. Their faces would have made study sufficient for the greatest painter of the world. There was not a young man present, not one whose face did not show lines deep graven, whose hair was not white, or gray, or grizzled. Many faces there were, but from the eyes of each shone the same light. The grasp of the hand of each meant the same thing. They stood, hand clasped to hand, soul clasped to soul; greed and power clasped to greed and power.

soon as these two men went away from me my feet got cold; but if they hadn't come back, I think I'd have jumped in the river. I *want* to let go of this thing right here—it scares me. But I just can't, that's all."

They made no comment. The atmosphere seemed strangely strained, tense. An old and beardless man, thin, pallid, leaned against the table, his eyes staring, his face almost corpse-like. No voice was raised in criticism or indeed in comment, but all sat weighing, pondering. Rawn was the first to break the silence.

"Gentlemen," said he, "of course this is the big part of our company patents, and it is over this that we've met to-day. You've been doubting my executive ability. I have shown you what the prize is that we're working for—there it is on the table. As to the difficulties of pulling off a thing as big as this, they are bigger in this case than could be expected or figured out in advance. Our superintendent, Mr. Halsey here, tells me that he is having a great deal of trouble in labor matters. The men are discontented, and what is worse, they're *curious*, all the time. We can't employ just any sort of irresponsible labor, and we can't complete one machine—we've got to bring them *all* through, at once, together—indeed, got pretty near to finish them all ourselves. We can't take any people in on this secret, of course. It all takes time, and it all takes money.

"I've got my report here, all these pages, which I'll not trouble you to read unless you like. What I want to say is this: we've got our power plant, and our wire transmitter system, and we're making money on that, as everybody knows. We can pay dividends on the

old way of transmitting power, developing the 'juice' by water power and peddling it out by wire. We can pay ten per cent., and a stock dividend every year, for we are earning nineteen and eight-tenths per cent. now, on wire work alone, not mentioning our exclusive franchises. Nobody can put a value on those. Up to this time most of us have been contented to reach out and get hold of water powers in the old way—that didn't look so slow to us then as it does now. If we should throw away, entirely, this part of our device, we still would stand just as safe as we ever would have stood.

"Again, suppose we wanted to play the market, and throw away every idea of using this second current of electricity. We could list this stock to-morrow and make it the most active issue on the Street. That's plain to all of us.

"Again, let's reason over this matter and see whether it isn't impatience and not distrust which is troubling all of us. We haven't really spent so very much money in the receiver installations. There isn't a stockyards firm in Chicago which doesn't put aside a bigger appropriation every year for scientific experimenting than we're putting into what is no experiment, but a certainty. It is a drop in the bucket, as my figures here show distinctly.

"Now, since these things are true, I just came down here to ask you gentlemen what it is that you want? You've been criticizing me. We've thought enough of this thing to plan legislation in Congress and in the adjoining states where we are working. We've been at a lot of trouble one way or other. We've wanted to get a

"Move we 'journ," said Ackerman. The president dropped the gavel on the table top.

VI

Rawn finally escaping from the crowd of importunate reporters who waited in the halls, at length broke away to go to his rooms. He met Halsey in the lobby. The latter had in his hand a telegram, which shook somewhat as he extended it.

"Well," said Rawn, turning toward him with a frown, "what is it?"

He read: "Charles S. Halsey, The Palatial, New York: Your child is a girl. The mother is doing well. You would best return at once. There is a slight deformity. You must share this grief with the mother when she knows—"

Rawn dropped the message to the floor. Halsey's face looked so desperately old and sad that for one moment Rawn almost forgot his own grief. "You'd better go on home, Charley," he said. "Too bad—to get such news *now*! But isn't that just *like* a woman!"

CHAPTER VI

IN PROPER PERSON

I

JOHN RAWN stood looking at the unceasing throng which surged confusedly through the corridors of the gilded hotel. Warmth, music, a Babel of voices, were all about. There approached a little group of laughing men coming from the carriage entrance, bound, no doubt, to a banquet hall somewhere under the capacious roof. One voice rose above the others as the group advanced. There appeared, rapidly talking and gesticulating as he came, a ruddy-faced, stocky figure, with head close-cropped, jaw undershot, small eyes, fighting terrier make-up.

"I tell you, gentlemen, I'll compromise not in the least on this matter! It makes no difference what they do with the ticket or with me. There's only one way about these matters, and that's the right way! I care nothing whether this man be a rich man or a poor man. The only question is, whether he is *right*. If he is *not* right, he will never—I say to you, gentlemen—" this with close-shut jaw and fist hard smitten into palm—"I say to you, it makes no difference who he is or what he is, he'll never win through; and in the event you suffer from us—"

He passed on, gesticulating, talking. Men commented audibly, for there was no mistaking a man idealized by some, dreaded by others, scorned by none, anathematized by not a few. He was to address that night a meeting of independent politicians, so-called, here in the very house of individualistic power, and many old-line members of his party had their doubts, the fear of a new party being ever present in the politician's mind—the same fear professional politicians, Whig, Democrat, what-not, had of the new party formed before the Civil War at the command of a people then claiming self-government as their ancient right—as now they begin again to do, facing our third War of Independence.

"Going strong, isn't he?" commented one sardonically, within Rawn's hearing.

"That's all right, my friend," was the smiling answer of yet another. "Strong enough to make a lot of you hunt your holes yet. There's quite a few people in this little old country outside this island—and he'll—"

"Nonsense! No chance, not the least chance in the world!"

"You underestimate this new movement," began the other.

"New movement!—you're 'progressive,' eh? Got that bee? A lot of good it'll do you. It will be simply a new line-up following our old and time-tried political methods—it all comes to that, take my word. The people aren't in politics. A lot of professionals do our governing for us."

"All the same, there goes the people's candidate!"

"Take him and welcome," was the answer. "Take your candidate. We'll eat him up—if he runs."

They also passed on down the hall, gesticulating, their voices swallowed up with others, arising confusedly. This and that couple or group passed by, also talking, among them many persons obviously of notoriety, importance or distinction, though unknown to their observer. Rawn stood and watched them all. The scene was to his liking. The stir, the confusion, appealed to him. The flowering of the great city's night life was here, such as that is. It was the focus of our country's civilization, such as that is. Men worth millions passed, shoulder to shoulder, a wondrous procession, such as that is.

II

And here and there, always moving and mingling with those men whose reception or whose raiment announced them as persons of importance, moved women, beautiful women, floating by, brightly, radiantly, rustlingly—women blazing with jewels, women with bright eyes, women whose apparel bespoke them as accepted integers of the city's vast human sum.

Rawn stood studying the procession for a long time, eying group after group carefully. A conclusion was forming in his mind. He was learning that when a man has achieved power, success, wealth, notoriety even, he turns with his next thought to some woman; and finds some woman waiting.

Not, as he reflected, a woman grown old and gray. Not a woman with finger-tips blackened and roughened, of bowed figure and ill-fitting garb, of awkward and unaccustomed air—not to that sort of woman who would be noticed here for her lack of fitness in this

place. No, rather, as he noticed, men of influence or position or power turned to such women as these about him now—of distinct personality, of birth and breeding, or at least of beauty; women shimmering in silks, blazing in gems, women who looked up laughing as they passed, women young and beautiful, whose voices were soft, around whom floated as they walked some subtle fascination.

Rawn pondered. He saw passing a few men whom he knew, all with women whom he did not know. In each case his new-formed rule seemed to hold good; the exception being noted only in the bored and weary faces of men accompanied by women perhaps rustling and blazing in silks and diamonds, but not owning youth and fascination.

John Rawn found that power and beauty go hand in hand; that money and beauty also go hand in hand—which is to say the same thing. He began to ponder upon youth, beauty and love as appurtenances of wealth, success and power.

"That's the game!" he said half to himself. "Why, look at those chaps. They look pretty much alike, act pretty much alike, too. When a man has money to burn, there is only one way—and there it is!"

III

And then it occurred to John Rawn with sudden and unpleasing force that, although he was among this throng, he was not of it. Himself a man of power, success, yes, even of wealth, he lacked in certain be-tokening appurtenances thereto. A not unusual wave of self-pity crept slowly over him. Why should he,

a man of his attainments, lack in any degree what others had?

He stood pondering, not wholly happy, until presently he felt, rather than saw, a glance bent upon him by a man who passed, a stately and well-garbed young woman upon his arm. He was a man now in faultless evening dress, yet easily to be recognized—none less, indeed, than the dyspeptic director who so summarily had been dismissed by John Rawn himself not three hours ago. His dark face became even darker as he saw the victor of that controversy standing here alone. He smiled sardonically. To Rawn it seemed that he smiled because he saw the solitary attitude of a man as good as himself, as fit as himself for all the insignia of power, yet publicly self-confessed as lacking all such insignia. He started, flushed, frowned. He had shown these men, these influential magnates in New York, that he could be their master upon occasion—he had mastered this man passing yonder. Yet now he stood here alone, with no woman to advertise his power to the world; and men laughed at him! No woman wore his silks, displayed his jewels. He was John Rawn, born to the purple; yet he might be taken here for a country merchant on his first trip from home. . . .

He turned to the key-counter. The clerk, with infallible instinct—without his request—handed him the key to his room, not lacking acquaintance with men of Mr. Rawn's acquaintance, and knowing money when he saw it. . . . Rawn passed down the hall, went up two flights in the elevator, turned into the left-hand corridor, and at length knocked deliberately at a door where a light showed.

IV

"Come!" called a soft voice. He knocked again, a trifle hesitant, and looked down the corridor, each way. The voice repeated, "Come!" He pushed open the door.

Virginia Delaware stood before her dressing-glass, her toilet for evening completed except perhaps for a touch or two about her coiffure. She turned now, and flushed as she saw her visitor.

"Mr. Rawn!" she exclaimed; "I thought it was the maid! I had just called her."

Rawn turned and shut the door. "Never mind her," he said. "I will be gone in a minute. I just wanted—"

"You must go!" she exclaimed. "You ought not to have come—it is not permitted—it is not right!"

"How stunning you look, Miss Delaware!" was all he said. He had never before seen her arrayed in keeping with these other lilies of the field. Indeed, his life had given him small acquaintance with conventions, or those who practised them. He had no mental process of analysis as he gazed at her now, or he might have seen that after all the young woman's costume was no more than one of filmy blue, draped over a pure and lustrous white. He could not have named the fashion which drew it so daringly close at hip and hem as to reveal frankly all the lines of a figure which needed not to dread revelation for its own sake, whether or not for other sake. He could not have guessed what skill belonged to the hand that fashioned this raiment, could not have told its cost. To him the young woman was very beautiful; and he was too much confused to be capable of analysis.

The corsage of the gown, cut square and daringly deep, displayed neck and shoulders white as those of any woman of any city. Her figure gave lines had her costume not aided. She was beautiful, yes.

v

And there was something more, Rawn could not tell what. There was some air of excitement, of exaltation, some sort of fever about her, upon her. In her eyes shone something Rawn had never noticed there before. Hastily he made such inventory as he might of unanalyzed charms. He arrived at his conclusion, which was, that Virginia Delaware would do!

"You could travel in fast company, my dear girl," said he approvingly.

"What do you mean?" She turned upon him.

"That you could go quite a considerable pace, my dear girl. You'll *do*. Let me see your hands!" he demanded. And in spite of her he coolly took up a hand, examining the shapely finger-tips. He sighed. No needle had blackened or roughened them, the typewriter keys had not yet flattened them. He stepped back, looked at her from head to foot, appraising all her graces, valuing her height and roundness of figure. There was small light in his eye other than that of judicial approval. She bore out his theory.

"You surprise me!" was all he said.

"How do you mean, Mr. Rawn?—But you must go, you really must!"

There came a knock at the door. Rawn's negative gesture was positive. After a moment's hesitation the girl stepped to the door and spoke to the maid. "You

may return again in a little while, maid," she said. "I'm not quite ready now." In turn she stood with her back against the door, her own color rising.

"Oh, don't be uneasy," said John Rawn smiling. "This is quite considerable of a hotel, taking it as it is. There won't be any scandal over this."

"I don't think I understand you."

"I'm going in just five minutes. But I want to say something to you in the way of a business proposition, Miss Delaware."

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean." Her head was high, her color still rising.

"Nothing in the least wrong, my dear girl," said John Rawn. "It's simply a matter of business, as I said. You're here as my assistant, of course. But did it ever occur to you that as you stand there now, and as I stand here, we might pass in that crowd below there and not be known by *any one*?"

VI

She still stood looking at him, her color high, undecided as to his meaning even now as he went on.

"It would be rather a pleasant experience, perhaps, for you—as it would be for me—just to mingle with that giddy throng—say, for dinner. Would you like to be part of it? It's just a foolish thought that came to me."

She turned to him, her eyes bright, her face eager. "Could we, Mr. Rawn?" she said. "I'm crazy over it!"

"I see," he commented dryly. "You were dressing to go down to dinner?"

"No, no, I couldn't afford to do that, of course. I

couldn't go alone, and I had no company. I wasn't going down at all. I just dressed up—to—to—"

"Just to look at yourself in the mirror, isn't that it, Miss Delaware?"

"Yes, it's the truth!" She turned to him calmly at last, well in hand again. "I couldn't be one of them—couldn't be like those people down below, so I did the best I could up here—I dressed as much like them as I knew how. I—I—I *imagined*! I dreamed, Mr. Rawn. I've never known a real evening of that sort in all my life—but it's in my blood. I want to go, I want to dine, and drink, and dance—I'm mad about it, I know, but it's the truth! I want what I can't have. I want to be what I'm not. I don't know what's the reason. It's in the air—maybe it's in the day, in the country!"

VII

"Yes, it's the country," said John Rawn. "We're all going a swift pace, men and women both. I don't blame you. I understand you. Now I know what you want."

"What do you mean?"

"You want just about what *I* want."

"But, Mr. Rawn—"

"It's the same thing—it's *power* that you want, just as I do. I feel it in the air when I come near you. You feel the same way when you come near me!"

She nodded rapidly, her eyes narrowing. "Yes, it's true!" she said. "That's true."

"You want to have it within your ability to influence men, just as I do, don't you, Miss Delaware? That's what was in your soul when you stood before your

mirror there when I came in, wasn't it, Miss Delaware? You want to win, to succeed, to triumph, don't you, Miss Delaware—you've got *ambition*? Wasn't that your dream—isn't that what you were imagining, as you stood there and looked in your glass?"

"Yes, yes, it's true, I know it!" she admitted panting. "I know it, my God! yes, I can't help it! But what chance have I?"

"All sorts of chances, my dear girl. I don't make mistakes. I told you this is a business proposition. Now, then, tell me, why did you tog out this way?"

"I did it because I had to. I told you I couldn't help it. It was in my blood to-night!"

"Any man waiting anywhere, Miss Delaware?"

"On my word, no! I wasn't even going downstairs. But I told you I was mad to be in that crowd, where the rich people are. I wanted to hear the music, I wanted to see them—I wanted to pretend for one night that I was a part of it all!"

"You wanted to win—you coveted power! Is it not true?"

"Yes!" she blazed fiercely. And indeed at that moment the room seemed full of some large influence, moving, throbbing all about them.

VIII

"I wanted that," the girl admitted. "All the world does!"

"I suppose you wanted to see some strong man fall on his knees and beg of you?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry, my dear, but I'll not do that. But I

understand. So you searched out these glad rags and tried yourself out before the mirror there! Very good! You'll do! Believe me—or ask any man in all this city."

She nodded rapidly. "Yes, you know it, now."

"Now, you're no more mad than I am," said John Rawn. "You're as cool-headed as I am, if I know women at all. We think alike. You're young. I'm young enough. Where'd you get that gown?"

"I had it made—in an alley, in the city back home. It cost as much as I could afford. Thirty dollars!" She flung out the words scornfully.

"It looks three hundred; and I've seen worse below to-night that probably cost three thousand. But it's not yet quite complete—your costume."

"It was the best I had. You ought not to taunt me. I stood here facing myself. I felt disappointed, bitter! Yes, I'll admit that."

"You needn't be," said Rawn calmly. He nodded to her bare and unadorned neck, her hair which lacked brilliants, her fingers left unjeweled. The girl caught his meaning without further speech, and it hurt her yet more.

"What could I do? Why did you bring me here, Mr. Rawn? You've made me unhappy. I've seen it, and I can't be a part of it. It doesn't seem I can go back there to work and be just the same any more, after seeing the city here! I tell you, it's got in my blood, all at once."

"No," he said evenly, "not again just the same. We outgrow ourselves, and can't go back. I'm not the same man I once was." He half-unconsciously shifted to get a glimpse of himself in the mirror.

"But now, my business proposition is very simple. It holds good for one evening, Miss Delaware. I was just going to propose that we forget all this unhappiness, and do a little pretending for one night, say for one hour or so."

IX

He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket, and drew out something which suddenly flamed into dancing points and rays in the light that fell upon it. She stood motionless while he passed about her neck a tiny thread, delicate as if spun of moonlight. She held out her hand, and he slipped over it a gleaming ring of gems. She bent her head, and he placed a sparkling ornament in her hair. She had seen these jewels before. She turned to the glass now, her bosom heaving as she saw them gleam at her own neck, her own hands, in her own hair. She held out her hands to look at them now, and the gems flashed back challenge to her eyes, sparkling yet more brilliantly.

"It was nothing," said John Rawn tersely. "That's all that lacked. You're good as the best now. I've seen no woman in this city that is your equal in beauty. You were born for this life. Now do you understand what I mean? I say, you can carry it off!"

She turned to him, another woman, changing on the instant, something in her eyes he had never seen before. But in his own eyes there was at the time nothing save the original calm and purposefulness.

"As I was saying, then, since we can *both* carry it off, why not do so for an hour or so? I've read somewhere of masquerades. Why not try it?"

She turned to him, flushed, radiant, but slightly

frowning, puzzled, studying him. Rawn felt the query of her look, felt also something stirring down in his nature which he grappled at once and was able to suppress. His voice was cool and low as it was before.

"It's a big crowd below, and we'll be lost in it. I've learned already that you can be discreet. We'll drop down in there, where no one knows us. We'll try ourselves out, and see whether we'll do, here where the test is hardest. You're ambitious? So am I. This is the heart of the world—the place of gratified ambitions. What do you say, Miss Delaware? I've been looking around down there, and as nearly as I can see, I'm the only man in this avenue worth a million dollars who at this precise moment of the day isn't talking to some good-looking woman!"

"You flatter me!" commented the girl. He did not endeavor any analysis.

"Not in the least! I simply talk sense and business to you. I covet what you covet, love what you love, want what you want. Things which are equal to the same thing ought to be equal to each other—for just a little while, Miss Delaware. Isn't it true? If it is only play, why, let's play at it.

"I forgot to tell you," he added, "that my son-in-law, Mr. Halsey, has gone back to Chicago. He was summoned by wire. No one else knows us both. There wouldn't be one chance in many of our being seen by any one here who knew either of us, and if so, what harm? We'll go and dine as well as the best of them, in the main room. What do you say, Miss Delaware?"

X

She stood facing him now, seeming years older than she had a few moments before. A very skilled observer might possibly have suspected a certain new quality in the calmness of her eye. Beautiful she certainly was; alluring, irresistible in the ancient appeal of woman, she certainly ought to have been, and would have been to any but this particular man who now stood facing her, half smiling; a man of middle age, gray about the temples, of heavy-browed eyes, strongly lined face, of strong and bony frame; not an ill-looking or unmanly man one might have said, though years older than this young woman who stood now threading between her fingers the filmy moonshine chain which suspended the points of flame that rose and fell upon her bosom.

At last she said, hesitating, and holding up the flaming pendant, "I'm not to keep them?"

"No, Marguerite!" he smiled. "This particular Papa Faust retains a string on those jewels. They have been seen elsewhere, my dear girl. No, one night's use of them is all this business proposition carries, my dear."

He began to be just a shade more familiar; but she looked at him, still curiously helpless, because she found him strong where most men are weak and defenseless. He caught some sort of challenge in her attitude and in spite of himself trod a half step forward. . . . She evaded him. He heard her laughter rippling in the hall, and followed. . . . Soon they were in the crowded lift, packed in against shirt front and

aigrette, silks and jewels, arms and bosoms bared for the evening's fray.

XI

It may be true that no gentleman is grown in less than three generations, but it is not the case that it requires three generations to produce an aristocrat; and here was simple and perfect proof of that assertion. Head waiters make no mistakes! The head-waiter of the main hall unhesitatingly took John Rawn and his companion to as good a table as there was in the room. He knew the air of distinction when he saw it!

Heads, in plenty, of men and other women, turned as they passed through in that careless throng of the world-wise and blasé. They walked by quietly, simply, took their places with no ostentation. John Rawn had bethought him earlier as to the dinner order. He gave his directions now quietly, without hesitation.

The two ate and drank discreetly, comported themselves, in fact, easily as any of these scores of others. They did not lean toward each other and obviously talk secrets, they did not laugh uneasily and stare about. Among the many well-bred women in that room—where at least a few such were present—none showed an easier accustomedness than Virginia Delaware. Her eagerness, her feverish anxiety, all now were gone. She was perfectly in hand. It was her pleasure now only to prove her fitness for such a scene, to comport herself as though she had known no other surroundings than these in all her life. Once more the miracle of possibility in the young American woman was shown.

Rawn, discreet as his companion, looked on with approval. "You're *it!*" he once whispered across the table, as he bent above the menu. "You *are* the part!" Suddenly there came to him out of this occasion an additional surge of self-confidence. Yes, he said to himself, he, too, could travel this gait. He could step easily into this life, the summit of life in America—as he thought—as though born to it. He could spend money with the best. He could obtain for himself as beautiful a woman to wear his jewels as any man here in all this great city. He could as widely advertise his power, his wealth, as any of these. Did he not see envious eyes bent upon his companion and upon himself? It was done! He had won! He had succeeded!

XII

After all, it had been easy, as he had found so many things easy in the test. As to the young woman with him, John Rawn's cold heart went out in admiration. "By Jove!" he said, "she's a *lady*, that's what she is. She'd be—" Yet it is to be noted that his admiration for this young woman was primarily based not upon the usual impulses of men so situated, but upon a vast self-respect, for that *he* had placed her here and so proved his own judgment to be good. Some souls are slow to any love but that of self, the approbation of self being the breath of life to them. Even the beauty of Virginia Delaware—and she was beautiful—was swallowed up in John Rawn's love and admiration for himself.

There was, thus far, no suggestion of impropriety between them, now or later. They dined long, de-

liberately and well. Miss Delaware drank no wine, Rawn himself only abstemiously. The keenest delight of the evening felt by either came not of food or drink. The intoxication of the city's night life fell upon them, entered their souls. Distant and low-voiced musical instruments set the air athrob with sensuous melody. Flowers bloomed, jewels blazed, soft voices rose, wine added its stimulus here and there. But beyond this luxury, this sensuousness, beyond the novelty of it, beyond the vague impulses of a common humanity which runs through all the world, they felt the last and subtle delight which comes with an admitted assuredness of self—the consciousness of power and ability to prevail, the certainty of knowing all the path, all the full orbit of the great.

XIII

As they sat thus calmly, apparently, as most might have said, old habitués of scenes like this, apparently persons of wealth and distinction, Rawn felt once more bent upon him the look of a passer-by. There approached the table where they sat the couple he had seen earlier that evening, a stately and beautiful young woman, whose features now were a trifle more animated, whose eyes were brighter; and with her the same dyspeptic director, sallow, with pointed dark beard. His face flushed still more as he saw John Rawn and his companion. He turned an admiring gaze upon the latter, whom of course he did not recognize. Rawn caught the gaze. It was the keenest delight of his evening that he could smile back, showing his own teeth also.

"By Jove!" muttered the ex-director to himself.

"I beg pardon!" haughtily commented his own fair companion, who had caught his gaze aside. "You know that person? Who is she?"

"I don't know, my dear—I'm just trying to think. Her face—it looks like the goddess on some stock certificate I've seen—"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, goddess with a handful of lightning bolts."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. We might call her the 'Lady of the Lightnings' to-night. She surely does shine like the bright and morning star, the way she's illuminated—eh, what?"

"Indeed?"

"Well, hang it all! Yes. She's a looker, too!"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, *indeed!* And they both look like ready money." The ex-director gave a little laugh.

"You don't know them?" asked his companion, more placated as they reached the corridor, where Virginia Delaware was at last out of sight.

"No, I don't know her—never saw her before, unless, as I said, in an engraving. Don't worry—I haven't got any of the engravings—now."

"Who is he?"

"Fellow by name of Rawn, from Chicago."

"Oh!"

CHAPTER VII

JOHN RAWN, PROMINENT CITIZEN

I

THE blare and blaze of American life went on in all its capitals of industry. Buildings sprang up, factories poured their smoke unceasingly into the sky. Men ran hither and thither like ants, busy about what seemed to them of importance. Vast hives of heaped-up stone twice daily poured out their population of small creatures, some of them crippled, hurt, shorn in the battle of life, their faces pale, their forms bowed and stunted before their time. Out of the rich West poured always a steady stream of the products of the soil and of the mines, wealth unspeakable, dug from the resources of this admirable country of ours. Many produced it, a few controlled it, all required it.

But there came a sort of hush over all the country, as though an eclipse were passing, or some gloom cast by a cloud coming between these cities and the sun. Men said that business was not so good as it should be, though the country was richer than ever. None understood the popular unrest. Many pondered, many attempted to explain, but they found all save the easy and obvious explanation. The masses remained morose, dissatisfied. Pamphlets appeared. In the

journals pretending to give voice to popular trend of thought there were now to be seen many screeds from many unknown men. Some men said that prices should rise, others that rates of transportation should rise, but that wages should decrease. Others said that wages should increase—a few only of these, not many; for those who needed most a larger wage were those most dumb of expression, least able and least apt to make any public protest. Our proudest may be our poorest—our neediest our most silent.

II

In John Rawn's slowly growing factories near the western capital wages did not rise. He kept on his fight with the labor organizations. For this reason he met additional expense and additional delay in carrying on his plans, but still waged war, relaxing not at all, meeting pickets with policemen, force with force. The popular discontent of the day meant nothing to him. His eye was fixed ahead. To Halsey's complaints on the one side, his directors' discreet grumbling on the other, he paid as little attention on the one hand as upon the other. John Rawn had a dream, and he knew that his dream must come true. His dream was one of a wide-reaching and relentless power, shared by those few men destined by fate to own the so-called American republic. Let the people do what they would, all they could. This was his dream. It had come to him in all its fullness one evening in the great city of the East. He exulted.

As to the industrial situation in International Power, Rawn now began to prove himself a good business

man, and he received more and more the grudging confidence of his associates, who came from almost every rank of big business. Through the aid and advice of these, his private fortune began to mount up enormously. So also did International Power make money. The only sore place of the directors' overstrained nerves centered in affairs at the gaunt building in the suburb, where a dozen mysterious machines, toothed and armed, cogged and coiled, still stood in a state of half-completion, as inchoate and mysterious now as they had been at their inception. None of the workmen, none of the foremen, could guess what they would look like when completed.

There was something else, which not the most suspicious guessed—*John Rawn himself did not know!* His success was a vast bubble. Halsey was the only man who ever had known the full secret of mantling one of the miraculous receivers which they all had seen and all had accepted. Rawn, bold enough, kept this to himself, although he feared to go to Halsey and make any demands. Halsey held grim peace for months—indeed, for more than four years in all, counting from the first motor made in the Kelly Row woodshed. It was risky, but for once Rawn dared make no desperate move. Halsey talked little. He was very sad since the birth of his hunchbacked child. Sometimes he talked to Virginia Delaware about it; never to his wife, Grace.

And still the seven days' wonder of International Power remained to puzzle the industrial world. No inkling of the real intention of the company ever got out. There was, as Rawn had predicted, no market for the stock, for the reason that it was not listed and

for the further reason that it was not sold. It was held in a close communion of hard-headed and close-mouthed men, and there were no confidences betrayed. The thing was too big to conform to ordinary rules. In the center of all this stood the figure of John Rawn, suddenly grown large and strong. He ruled his army, officers, staff and line, cavalry, infantry and auxiliaries, as one born originally to command. He brooked neither parleying nor thwarting of his will—except in one instance. He never made any demands on Halsey, never gave him any peremptory orders after that one day in the office, months earlier, before Halsey made his first trip to New York.

III

These months seemed to have aged John Rawn, none the less. He grew grimmer and grayer, more taciturn and reserved. At the clubs he was one of the most talked-of men in town, and one who talked least himself. As his hair grew grayer at the temples, his jaw grew harder, at the corner of his chin coming the triangular wrinkles which go with hard-faced middle age. Enigmatic, self-centered, he could not have been called a happy man. He smiled but rarely, joked not at all, engaged in no badinage, told no stories, found no lighter side of life, played no golf, had no vacations. Like some vast engine of tremendous driving power he went on his way, admired in a city and country full of able men, as one competent to hold his own with the best and strongest of them all. And still of all his traits stood out the one of self-confidence. He played a game of enormous and continuous risk—

fundamental risk by reason of Halsey, incidental by reason of his widely ballooned market operations; yet his nerve held. Moreover, he was learning the price of success—an absolute devotion to the means of success. When he learned that the child of his daughter was not a son, but a girl, and that it was a hunchback for life, a sad-faced, unsmiling child—he set his jaws for a moment, but said few words of condolence, either to his daughter or her husband. He did not smile for three months after that, and never referred to this subject again, after its first discussion with his wife at Graystone Hall; but it cost him no time and no energy lost from business. It only deepened in his soul his growing hatred for Charley Halsey, the man whom he dared not chide.

IV

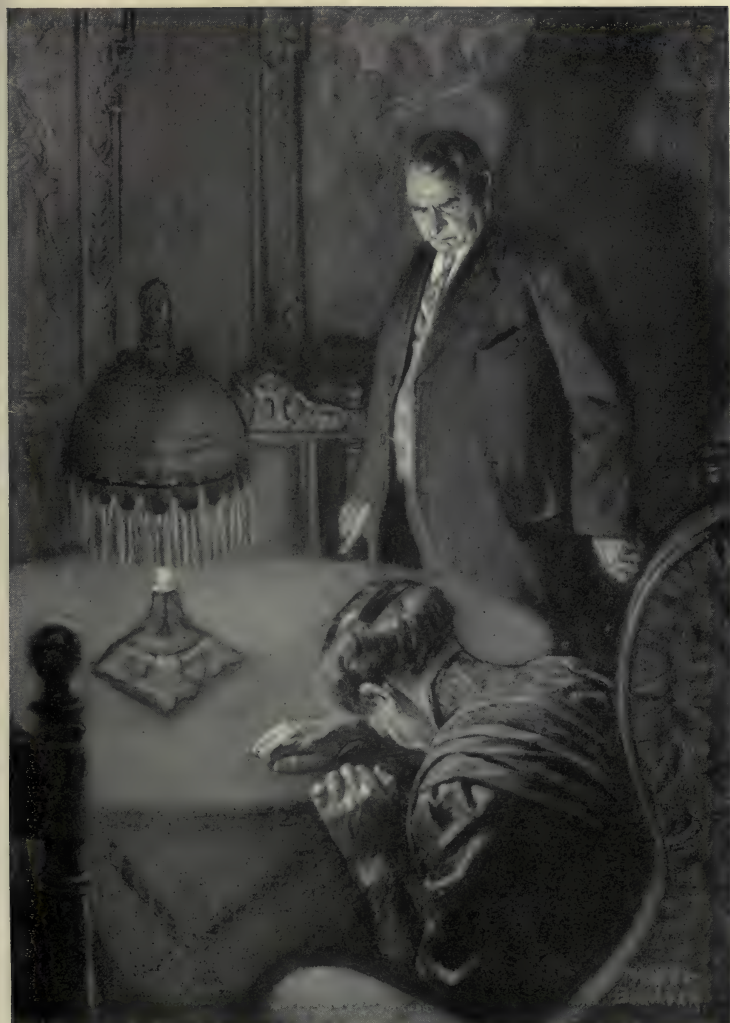
In the headquarter offices a vast, smooth running business machine had now been built up. Rawn was an organizer. The laxness and looseness of the old railway offices in St. Louis, where he had got his business schooling, were missing in the headquarters of International Power. Employees had small time to gossip in business hours. Out of business hours, it is to be confessed, once in a while there was discussion as to the salary of Miss Virginia Delaware, which was reported a wholly instable affair. It was rumored in stenographic circles that she had taken to wearing very stunning evening gowns. Yet not the most captious—though willingness did not lack—could raise voice against her, or couple her name with any other. Rawn and she were never seen together excepting during

business hours; he never mentioned her name in any company. Once or twice a laughing voice at the National Union, where rich men met in numbers, tried to create some sort of discussion over Rawn's beautiful private secretary, but it was so suddenly stopped by Rawn himself that it never was resumed.

Upon the other hand, few could speak in definite knowledge regarding the domestic matters of John Rawn. He was a man of mystery, though one of known and admitted power. He held what he gained; and, as there must have been accorded to him strength of soul, grasp, readiness, courage, he began to be accepted as one of the large figures of his day alike in industry and finance. He had by this time fully arrived in the prominent citizen class in his chosen metropolis. Did firemen perish, John Rawn joined the list of those who aided the widows. Was some neighboring city swept by flames, again he joined—on the front page of the papers—those who gave succor for the needy. Did a famine in India or China sweep off a million souls, John Rawn—on the front page—aided the survivors. He was a member of the leading clubs of the city, a director of the board of the art institute. He bought if he did not occupy a box at the opera, and allowed his name to be mentioned at the banquets offered by eager souls to celebrities of one sort or another who proved themselves amenable to receptions, banquets, addresses of welcome, and what-not, anything to bring lesser names into print on any page, tails to any kite. In short, John Rawn comported himself as a prominent citizen should. Ever he was the kite, never the tail. He loomed a large and growing figure in his little world.

v

Above all, there seemed something uncanny in the unvarying facility with which Rawn made money. There is no real explanation of the difference in money-making power, except that some men make money and some do not. Rawn did, without any doubt or question. Not lacking ability and calmness in judgment, and not lacking full information such as is accorded those said to be upon the sacred inside of the market, he was in and out of Rubber, Coppers, Steel, at precisely the right time. His oil investments in California, played up and down in proper symphony, had made him more than a million dollars, smoothly, easily, simply. The railways market was an open book to him, and Public Utilities seemed something he could gage while others stood and wondered. There are times when some men win. Rawn could not lose, whether he dealt in Ontario Silvers, Arizona Coppers, anything he liked. He was in with the pack when, in these last fierce days of individual and corporate greed, it finished pulling down a republic, and battered, guzzled at the bowels of the quarry. He partook with these of a broad knowledge of the narrowing raw resources of the country, and was in with them at the death. He was one of those to get hold of large acreages of the passing timber lands, he was counted with those who sought the great coal fields for their own; ran true to scent, with these, the trail of monopoly in any commodity which the people more and more must need. In the one matter of his relations with a certain transcontinental railway, Rawn made a quarter million as his share of the three-quarters of a



billion taken in sales of mineral lands from the railway's land-grant holdings. That the grants had covered only agricultural lands mattered little, for when the sleepy government at Washington reluctantly took the trail, it was shown a law, cunningly passed a few years earlier, which barred the republic, by virtue of a six-year statute of limitations, from recovering any of its own property! John Rawn often laughed over that. He laughed also when the "suckers," as they called them, bit just as eagerly at irrigation as they had at mines. He often laughed—it was all so ridiculously easy to pull down a country, when the running was in good company! He was a prominent citizen.

CHAPTER VIII

A PRINCELY GENEROSITY

I

MR. RAWN went on with the pack. He was in and out of the market. His money grew. His ambition also grew. He felt coming now upon him another change. He said to himself that he was now about to pass up, into yet another era of his development.

One day, after his usual day's routine, he closed his office door, took his car at the curb, dropped in at his club, imbibed the two cocktails which were now his evening wont, and again emerging, nodded to his chauffeur in the fashion which meant "Home!" They passed on out again through the floating crowd of various and often vulgar vehicles, northbound—shrieking aloud in a vast united chorus, demanding speed, speed, and yet more speed—along the throbbing arteries of the city's population. At last he stopped once more at the front of Graystone Hall. "Forty-five minutes, Dennis," said he to his driver, snapping his watch. "Twenty-one miles; you'll learn it after a while."

Mr. Rawn was in exceptional good humor. He was at peace with the world and with his conscience. He looked about him now calmly, with approbation in his gaze. His gardeners had done wonders. The walks

were solid and well kept, the greensward sound and flourishing. These late stubbed and desolate trees were now wide, green and branching. The crocus borders were unbroken, the formal monochrome beds, here and there upon the lawn, showed clean-cut and distinct. The tall pillars of his motley house even had a green veiling of ivy, swiftly grown by art, and not by time. On a terrace a bed of foliage plant, thirty feet long, grew in the shape of a word—a magic word—*“Rawn.”* If any passer-by wished knowledge as to the creator of all this, he might read as he ran—*“Rawn.”*

Rawn passed up the steps and looked out through the long hallway from the rear of the house, or rather its real front, which lay upon the lake shore. Beyond, he could see the faint curl of the distant steamers' smoke against the horizon. He stopped for a moment, drinking in the scene, of which he never tired. There were birds twittering softly in the trees about him. He caught the breath of flowers, coming to him from the halls within. Yes, it was an abode suited for a prominent citizen.

There came to meet him now the quiet footfall which he had come to expect, not always patiently or with pleasure, as the natural end of his day's labors; his wife, Laura, had never forgotten this daily greeting of the old-fashioned wife to her husband, as the latter returned at the close of his day's labor.

II

He stopped as he heard her slow tread upon the stair. She was coming to meet him. She always did.

He, John Rawn, controller of men, a man born to succeed and going yet higher, had only, after all, an old-fashioned wife!

It was an emergency this evening. He was accustomed to meet emergencies. He had come to-night prepared to meet this one.

"Laura," said he, after the servants had drawn the curtains and left them alone in the central room, whither they had repaired after dinner; "sit down here, I want to talk to you a while."

"Yes, John," said she quietly. But she looked at him startled. Her face grew suddenly grave. Be sure the brute advancing to the poll-ax knows its fate. That was the look in Laura Rawn's face now. "Yes, John," she said, knowing what blow was to be hers.

He motioned her to a seat beyond the little table and seated himself opposite. Reaching into a bulging pocket, he brought out a thick bundle of folded papers; long, narrow papers, most of them green, others brown, or pale pink. He pushed this bundle across the table, so that his wife must see it. She reached out a hand, but did not look at it.

"What is it, John?" she said. Her hand tarried, her face went still more weary and gray, became even of an ashier pallor than was its wont.

"It's a trifle, Laura," said John Rawn. "Look at it. There's bonds and gilt-edge dividend-payers for just exactly *one million dollars!*"

"One million *dollars*, John! What do you mean?"

"Look at it, see for yourself."

"But, John—what does it mean?"

"It means a great deal, Mrs. Rawn, a great deal for

you. It took some work to make it on my part. There are not ten men in this town to-day who could draw out of their business clean, unhypothecated securities for a million dollars. I've seen to it that all these are registered in your name. It's my gift to you, without reservation."

"John, how could I thank you—but I don't want it! I've not earned it, I wouldn't know what to do with it. You're always so—so kind, John, with me. But I can't take it! It's not mine!"

"It is yours, Laura. And you've got to take it!"

"But I don't want to!"

"I want no foolishness," he said sternly. "That money is yours. You can use it as you like. Of course, I will counsel with you as to reinvestment the best I can. I don't want to see the interest wasted.

"I don't ever want to see you in need," he went on. "I don't counsel loose investments. My lawyers will also tell you what to do with your money, and they'll put up to you a list of good, safe, savings-bank investments, the kind that fools and sailors ought to have. I'll help you choose, if you like. I don't want to be ungenerous. This is your estate."

III

"My *estate*!—But, John, I'm your wife! I don't care for this money. I don't understand it, and I don't want it. I want to be your *wife*, John, the way I always was—I want to help—I want to be useful to you all the time, as I've always tried to be."

"Precisely, Laura, and I appreciate that feeling very

much. I feel the same way. I want to be as useful as I can to you. We have always been loyal to each other, faithful with each other; I know that. There are not ten men worth my money in this town to-day who can say what I can—that they've been faithful to their wives as I have been to mine. You've been a good woman, and you've worked hard. You say you haven't earned this money, but I think you have. We've been useful, yes, to each other. But when we can't be any more, Laura, why then—"

The tears burst from her eyes now. He frowned, that she should interrupt him, but went on.

"It shall never be said that I was unkind to you, Laura. Indeed, I shall always feel kindly to you—always remember what you have done."

"But you don't, you *don't*, John!"

"I don't? What do you mean by that, Laura? Isn't there the proof? Isn't there a *million dollars* lying right in front of you on that table? And you say this to me, who have just given you a cold *million!*"

"That's it, it's a *cold* million, John," said she bitterly. "It's *cold!*"

"Good God! The unreasonableness of woman!" said John Rawn, upturning his eyes. "Now I've thought all this out as carefully as a man can. I've denied myself, to take this much capital out of my investments and set it aside for you. I can make five millions out of that money in the next five years. But no, I reserve it, and I give it to you without stint. I give it to you for your estate, so that you shall never know want—more money than you ever had a right to dream of having. You do that for a woman, and what does she say? Why, she doesn't *want* it! Good God!"

IV

"John," she said, struggling for her self-control, "you might at least tell the truth."

"What do you mean—the truth?"

"It's some other woman, of course!"

"I swear to you, Laura, it's nothing of the sort. I've been guilty of no act with any one—" But she shook her head.

"Don't I know?" she said. "It's *always* another woman. She's a young woman, whoever she is. Why don't you come out and tell me the truth, John? How long before you're going to be married?" The tears were welling steadily from her eyes, under the last of the many and bitter torments which are so often a woman's lot.

"I say to you again, Laura, there are no plans of that sort in my mind!"

"Then how long will it be before our—our—" She could not say the word "divorce." She had been an old-fashioned wife.

"I've no plans as to that. I was only wanting to discuss the matter quietly to-night, without any disturbance."

"No," she said, "I must not break down! Tell me, when does it come, John?" But still the tears came, steadily, and she made no effort to stop them.

"When you like. I would suggest that you quietly go to some other place, Laura. That will be best for me. Why—" he added this in a burst of confidence, "—there wouldn't be twenty people around town would know you'd gone! I can keep a close tongue, and so can you."

"But, John, why should we? I've never crossed you in any way. I've always tried to do what you liked. Why should we part? I'll be willing just to live along here quietly. I can't bear to think of going away. I like my things. John," she said suddenly, and seemingly irrelevantly, "who told you about all these things, these collectors' pieces that you've been getting for so long?"

He winced with sudden self-revelation, astonished at this intuition on her part. He had been sincere in his statement that there was no other woman in his affections. He had only forgotten that he had no affections. He flushed now, but tried to pull together.

"Very well, Laura," said he; "you only prove to me what I've felt for some time. You can't understand me, you simply are not up to my requirements. I'm willing to say *you'd* be content to live along here, just as we did at Kelly Row. *I* am not content to do anything of the sort. I've been thinking over this, studying over it for some time. There's the answer." He nodded toward the bundle which lay upon the table.

V

"It's no use trying to make the world all over again, Laura," he said after a time. "We've both done our best, but our best didn't tally. We've hung together. What's right is right. Is it right for me to be dragged down by your own limitations—ought I to stop in my own career to conform to that? Would that be *right*, now, Laura, for a man like me?—Is it right for any man? If you can't go forward, ought I to go back?"

If we can't both travel the same gait, whose gait ought to govern? Whatever you do, don't blame me, that's all. But you *did* blame me—you do now." A grave look sat upon his face. He felt himself an injured man.

"Yes, John," she said. "I do."

"Of course, of course! That's the reward a man gets for loving his wife, treating you as I have. Well, we're not the first to face a situation of just this kind. Things travel swifter now than they did when we were children, or when we were married. What did then will not do to-day. Why blame ourselves for that?—blame the time, the way of the world, the way things go to-day. This country has changed—it goes faster every year. We've got to keep the pace, I tell you, when we get into it. Those who can't must drop out, and that's all there is about it. I was born for the front, and that's all about that. Don't blame me. I've never blamed you!"

"Then, what *do* you blame, John?"

"Nothing, I say. It's the way life runs. We're married, why? Because we thought we were to have some property to protect. There is much to be said in favor of the marriage institution. It holds property safe under its contract. *Property*—that's the sign of power! *Property* is the only reason for marriage; or for government, when it comes to that. *Property* is the token of power. I've got that! But something else goes with it! Why, Laura, when I look at us both I wonder that I've been patient so long, held back as I have been by your own narrow ideas. If you'd had your way, you'd have set up Kelly Row right where we are now!"

VI

"I'm old-fashioned, John," said she, her head high, though her tears fell free, "I'm just an old-fashioned, worn-out wife, that's all. I'm not so very much, John, and I never thought I was very much. I just did the best I could, all the time. I couldn't seem to do any more, John. I don't know how. I did my best!"

"We all do!" said John Rawn philosophically. "We all do our best. But when our best isn't good enough to keep us up, we go down!"

He spoke generously, gravely, judicially. He was arbiter, in his own belief, not husband. The country had changed since they two had married.

"Yes, there's much to be said for the institution of marriage, Laura," he repeated after a time. "In fact, it is a necessity, as society is organized. But divorce is a natural corollary of marriage. There are contracts, and broken contracts. That's all!"

"What is a—a corollary, John?" she asked.

"It's a consequence; it is something that follows. I meant to say, that if it is right for two people to be married, it is right for them to be divorced when the time comes. It's *property*, and the consequences to property, which sometimes determine that!"

"But we said, John, when we were married—I swore it with all my heart—'Till death do us part!' It isn't death. I wish it were!"

"No, it's property," said John Rawn.

VII

"But all this serves no purpose," he continued. "I don't want to have you make this hard for me!"

"Ah, God! How you've changed, John, since the old times! How you've changed!"

"So that's it, is it?" he rejoined bitterly, "I've only changed, and you're sorry that I changed. Well, suppose we agree to that. I *have* changed!"

"What do you want me to do, John?" she asked after a time, her breath still, in spite of herself, coming in sobs. "When do you want me to go?"

"To-morrow, Laura. There's no use waiting."

"Very well; where shall I go?"

"Why, I don't dictate to you, Laura—I leave that all for you to determine. You can be happy as you like, and where you please. I would only suggest, if you ask me, that you take up a residence in some quiet community, a sort of place that seems to suit you."

"Very well, John; I've not many friends here to leave, that's true. I've not been happy here; I never would be. I'll agree to that much. I believe I'll go back to our old town—I'd feel better there!"

"You've good judgment, Laura," he noted with approbation. "What you say has good sense about it. Very likely you'd be more happy there than here. But wherever you go, don't forget your old husband, John. Deep in my work as I shall be, I will always think of you, Laura, with nothing but kindness. I want you to think that way of me—to remember that I've been *kind* to you, always. You will, won't you, dear?"

She did not seem to hear. Her face was bowed down upon her arms, flung out across the table. She was an old-fashioned woman, and still silly enough to pray to the God who had placed her in this **w**orld of puzzles.

BOOK THREE

CHAPTER I

THE EXTREME MONOGAMY OF MR. RAWN

IT is always more or less annoying to put away a wife. Even if the expense of the process be little, as in these modern days it has come to be, and even if consent thereto be mutual, as is so often the case, there are in practically all cases so many unpleasant attendant features as almost to dispose one to favor the abolishment of the marriage idea, and to condemn it as one not destined to survive in these days of modern competition. This, the more especially as regards that monogamic idea of marriage which the government at Washington harshly seeks to extend over our entire domain. As to the idea of polygamy, much may be said in its favor. Thus, if one be tired of one wife, or bored by another, in polygamy it is easy to shift the domestic scene to a third, and that in wholly good-humored fashion. The idea of divorce has about it something almost personal, as though one were displeased over some matter, as though one held in one's heart something actually of criticism, or dissatisfaction, or mayhap condemnation of one's own earlier judgment in the selection of a helpmeet.

Again, even after divorce has been consummated, there are so many small habits to be broken, heritage and hold-over of relations but recently sundered. For instance, if one has been accustomed every Friday evening to have shoulder of pork and boiled cabbage at table, and if only one woman has evinced ability to prepare shoulder of pork and cabbage in the proper manner, and if that woman has chanced to be one's lately current wife, it is, let us repeat, an annoying thing to find that that particular woman, after deliberately forming and fostering in one a craving for shoulder of pork and cabbage—after having established an addiction, as it were, in one's soul for that viand—has with shameless disregard of wifely duty and domestic decency obliged one to divorce her, perhaps *ex vinculo*, or at least *ab mensa et thoro*.

And again there may be yet other habits upon the one hand or the other which must be broken or readjusted. If one's wife—or one of one's wives—has been in the habit of leaving her tatting each afternoon on the top of the table near the best view out of the bow window, and if one sees continually this abandoned tatting permanently left there in the confusion of her permanent departure—it is annoying, let us repeat, to be reminded of a habit to whose creator we have said farewell. It causes a mental *ennui* constantly to be removing tatting or embroidery.

Or, if one's current wife has had the old-fashioned and not wholly well-bred habit of meeting one at the door of an evening, at the close of the day's labors—just as in the evening the cave woman greeted her man at the mouth of the cave to ask him what had been the fortune of the day's hunt—and if now that

footfall, ill-bred, yet after all habitual—and was it wholly unwelcome, after all?—shall have ceased for ever, with what equanimity, let us ask, can we regard the memory of the woman who formed that habit and handed down an annoying expectation to her husband, impossible of fulfillment after her departure?

It is, as John Rawn wisely has said, true that much may be said in favor of the idea of marriage; yet upon the other hand, how very much there is that could be said against it, or at least against it as implying an unrestricted continuance, offering no change in association. The which is by way of saying something to prove John Rawn's excellently philosophical course in life to have been quite correct. There could have been no doubt as to the wisdom of his marrying Laura, his wife, in the first place, no doubt as to the wisdom of continuing the marriage relation with her for many years; but, upon the other hand, it is obvious that his idea of the timeliness of the divorce in due season was equally wise. Indeed, the only reservation in his mind in regard to this latter matter was one of censure for a woman who, having entered into the holy state of matrimony with a gentleman of his parts, had had the temerity to create in his soul an addiction for shoulder of pork and cabbage; who had left her tatting upon the table; and who, departing, had given no future address whither her tatting might be sent! Yes, Laura Rawn had been, without doubt or question, an unreasonable and unkind wife.

Above all it was wrong for a woman to go away and leave her late husband feeling so much alone. Why should he, John Rawn, be allowed to become conscious of a feeling of lonesomeness? Why should he be left

to dread the drawing of the curtains at night, when there remained only the pound of the surf along the wall, the wail of the wind in the cornice? One chloroforms a formerly prized dog, but misses it. It is much the same way with the divorced wife. Too many unpleasant features attend the process of such separation. Any civilization worth the name ought to devise some method less annoying for this which Mr. Rawn has so fittingly described as the corollary of the marriage rite. Surely our boasted age has its drawbacks, its shortcomings!

II

Some men in such circumstances brood; some drink; others search out the other woman or women. John Rawn was cast in different mold. He had, in short, spoken truth when he told his wife that he had no new matrimonial plans. Situated thus, yet handicapped thus in his new-found solitude, but a few days had passed before he sent over for his daughter, Grace, and her husband, Charles Halsey; there being in his mind a plan to mitigate certain unpleasant features of his life as he now found it ordered.

He greeted Halsey and Grace at the door gravely, with dignity, when they came one evening in response to his invitation. They entered, just a trifle awed, as they always were, by the august surroundings of Graystone Hall, so different from their own cottage near the factory. The owner of the place looked well the part of owner here. John Rawn still was large and strong, the city had not yet much softened his lines. His hair now was whiter about the temples, but its whiteness left his appearance only the more dis-

tinguished. You scarce could have found in all the haunts of prominent citizens a better example of prominent citizen than himself, John Rawn.

The major domo took the wraps of the young people and vanished silently. Rawn, waiting for them in the drawing-room—not in the hall, as once he would have done—with dignity motioned them to places in his presence, even brought a low chair himself for the sad-faced, hunchbacked child which represented the Rawn succession in the third generation.

“Go kiss grandpa, Lola!” said Grace to her daughter; and went to show her the way. But the child, turning suddenly, only hid her face in her mother’s skirt.

“Laura’s timid,” apologized the mother. The disapproval on her father’s face was obvious enough. He had passed bitter hours alone, pondering over this child, hesitating whether to love it or to hate it, whether to accept it or to regard it as a blot upon his life. He had hoped a grandson, since he no longer might hope a son of his own. This crippled child was the sole Rawn succession. His pendulous lower lip trembled for a time in the self-pity which now and again came to John Rawn. It seemed hard enough that he, John Rawn, president of the International Power Company, should have no better evidence of gratitude on the part of fortune. He hated Halsey all the more.

III

But now he did not lack directness. “Grace,” he said, “I’ve called you over to-night because to-morrow, as you know, is Friday.”

"Yes, Pa."

"And as you know, Grace, your mother—that is to say, the late Mrs. Rawn, always had the way—in short, I may say that she induced me to depend upon—I mean to say that always she had shoulder of pork and cabbage for Friday evening. Now, I am left alone, helpless—it is too much!"

Mr. Rawn made no attempt wholly to conceal his just emotion. "Now look at me," he resumed. "Your mother went away, and selfishly neglected to take into consideration this habit, or to provide any means for meeting it. My chef has tried often to prepare this dish. I must say he always has failed."

"Why don't you write to Mrs. Rawn and ask her for the recipe?" asked young Halsey soberly.

"That is not practical," rejoined Mr. Rawn icily, "even did I know that lady's present address; as I do not."

His daughter sat gazing straight at him, under her heavy brows, but made no comment. Grace had not improved with years. Her face was heavy, pasty, her expression morose. The corners of her mouth turned down, and deep vertical frown-wrinkles sat between her dark eyebrows.

"But I do not wish that name mentioned again," said John Rawn raising a hand. "I dismissed that thought of asking her aid as something unworthy of me. Let Friday come. I shall seek no aid outside of those from whom it may fitly be expected." Ah, hero!

IV

"Now, Grace," he continued later, turning toward her, "I know very well you're a good housekeeper."

"She is that!" Halsey nodded. Continually he forced himself into such approval of his wife as he could compass. Continually he refused comparisons.

"Precisely, and skilled in all the dishes which the late Mrs. Rawn had as specialties. You do not know how things are running here, Grace. I can't get anything done on time, I'm at untold expense all the time, and am deprived of what I really want. Grace, I need a housekeeper!"

"Surely, Pa. Why don't you hire one?"

"How much better off would I be in that case? None in the least. No, I want you. You'll have to come over here to live!"

The young couple sat gazing at him for a time before making reply.

"That's impossible, Pa," said Grace. "I have a home of my own, and it's more than twenty miles from here."

John Rawn raised a hand. "I have thought all that out. You reason now, as so many do, when any distinct change of life is proposed to them. You let the little things outweigh the larger ones. It was a fault your mother had. Now the large matter, the really important thing, is this—that I can not be allowed to live on here in this way with all these annoyances. Too much depends upon me, in business, for me to have the quiet and peace of my life interfered with. I've got to have a clear head—especially on Saturday. Now, then, if you can step in here, my daughter, and establish in some measure the sort of life I have always been used to, evidently that is your duty, and you ought not to balance against it the small inconveniences which that course would cause you and

your husband. I'm quite sure you can teach that chef—"

"But, Mr. Rawn, I've got to be at the factory almost day and night!" broke in Halsey.

"Precisely. I do not mean for *you* to make your home here, only Grace. You'll have to stay on where you are. Of course, you can come here at times to report, at least once or twice a week—say Friday night. Very much depends on you, Charles. You know how much I value you, how much I rely on your services. Really, it all depends on you, our success as a company. We've been very patient, although I must say—"

V

Halsey muttered something under his breath and turned away. His attitude angered Rawn to the point of forgetting himself.

"Never mind what you think about it, young man! It's what *I* think about it that counts. Grace belongs here, anyhow. She will have a wider life with me. It's time she had some things which she has never known. It may be necessary for us to travel, to see something of this country and Europe. Besides, this child needs care. All these things cost more money than you can afford, young man. Don't try to balk me in what I suggest. It is obviously the right thing to do."

"But how long—"

"Indefinitely!"

"And you want me to break up my home 'indefinitely'? Well, I must confess I don't in the least see it that way, Mr. Rawn."

"You're selfish, and that's why you can't see it,

Charles. Above all things you ought to avoid the vice of selfishness. You are not parting from your wife, but only helping her to a better grade of living. Meantime, of course, your duty to her and to the company is to make a success of your work. Think of your business, my son. There is no good comes of selfishness. Try to be just. And for God's sake, also, try to get one of those machines done!"

Halsey only sat and looked at him darkly for a time, making no reply.

"It seems to me that I can never get you to understand, Charles," resumed Rawn, "that things are not the way they used to be before we came here to Chicago. I'm a bigger man now than I was then. I've *grown* these last two or three years, my boy. I should not be surprised if eventually I were obliged to make my residence in New York, if indeed not abroad. We are rising in the world, rising very fast, Charles. Do you want to go up with the Rawns, or stay down with the Halseys of this world? Besides, in this case you ought to respect the wishes of your own wife. You want to remember, my dear boy, that my daughter, Grace, is half Rawn as well as half Johnson. The only trouble with her is, the Rawn half has not yet had its innings."

VI

Halsey turned and stared at his wife. He found her sitting with her dark eyes fixed, now on her father, now wandering hither and yon over the rich surroundings in her father's home. To his intense surprise, she had as yet issued no veto to this calm proposal to which they all had listened. In his surprise he forgot

comment of his own. What caused him greatest surprise of all was his secret feeling that he was not so reluctant to this arrangement as he ought to be! He pondered Grace, her sour visage, her morose air. He recalled countless angry, irritated, irritating words. He looked, and saw no longer any feminine charm. It took all his resolution not to question why he had ever made this choice. Almost he began a certain comparison.

"Now let this end it," resumed John Rawn. "Let comforts, and let luxuries, come where they have been earned. It's the Rawn half of Grace that has earned the luxuries, Charles, if I am willing to give them to her. Take what you can get, my son, of comfort and luxury in this life—after you've earned them. But earn them first. Your place is over there at the works. This is your opportunity. Fall in with my plans and I'll carry you along. Don't try to hold Grace over there when she belongs here. Don't be selfish, Charles."

He relented just a trifle. "I don't say this is going to last for ever. Pull off success over there for us. I'll tell you what I'll do—the day you can charge a storage battery car from one of our second current receivers—finished and in place there in the factory—and run it from the factory up here, I'll make you a present of fifty thousand dollars."

VII

"And about Grace—?" Ah! that comparison—

"She'll be a good deal closer to you then than she is now. She's half *Rawn*, I tell you, Charles; and love in a cottage does not suit the Rawn blood to-day!

"But I'll tell you—" his face lightened a bit at the

jest—“you can go on with your brotherhood of man ideas over there at the factory. I hope you love them—those brothers who are trying to ruin me and this company! Try them out—associate with them—love them all you can. Compare that life with this, my boy; and when you’ve done your work, for which you are paid—when you can charge one car at one receiver, and come from that life to this, on the strength of your brains and your own ability, as I have come here myself—why, I say I’ll give you a slice of a million dollars! Then you can compare that life with this, and see how you like the two. I’ve made up my mind already about that! So has Grace.”

Halsey turned once more to his wife. She had changed in the last few minutes. Her eye was brighter, her color higher. She was gazing not at her husband nor at her child, but at these rich surroundings.

“I wonder if I could play one of my old pieces on the piano any more now?” she said gaily, rising and walking to the seat of the grand piano which stood across the room from them. “I’ve been so *busy*—”

CHAPTER II

ASPARAGUS, ALSO POTATOES

I

WHAT is written is written. Grace moved to Graystone Hall and Halsey remained at the factory cottage; nor did the separation, which was regarded by both as merely temporary after all, afflict either to the extent that both had supposed it would. Grace now became acting mistress of a large and elaborate *ménage*. As to her husband, his domestic affairs fell into the hands of Mrs. Ann Sullivan, wife of Jim Sullivan, Halsey's most trusted foreman in the factory.

Mrs. Sullivan, blessed with six children of her own, alleged that it would be no trouble whatever to her to take on the sweeping, mending, and all else for an additional household, and to furnish meals for the solitary head thereof; and such was her ability to make proof of all these statements that she in part was to blame for the sad truth that Halsey was not as unhappy as he ought to have been.

The chief reason for Halsey's easy readjustment, however, lay somewhere in his comparison of the Halsey blood with blood half Rawn. Grace had been cold, after all. She had openly been discontented, and

especially unhappy since the birth of the deformed child. She had left him and gone to her father with no great protest; nor did she, at the occasions of their rare and lessening visits, display more than lukewarm interest in her husband and her former home. Within six months she was beginning to blossom out in raiment, in demeanor. She spoke of things not in his knowledge though in hers. She was changing. She was going up in the world. He, for the time at least, was doing no better than to stand still; as the factory now was doing, and International Power, also—marking time, waiting for something.

II

Ann Sullivan was not a bad philosopher, besides being a good cook, and at times she did not hesitate to engage Mr. Halsey in conversation when they met at this or that time of the day; as when by chance, one noontide when he came home for lunch, he found her sweeping down the front stair.

"You're lookin' lonesome to-day, Mr. Halsey," she remarked without much preliminary. "You're fair grievin' for your wife, I suppose? But why should you expect anny woman to stay here whin she has such a Pa, with such a house as her Pa has?"

"Would you have gone over there, Mrs. Sullivan?" asked Halsey, stopping and feeling in his pocket for a pipe of tobacco. It was a question they often had discussed.

"Would I? In a minnit! I'd lave Jim Sullivan for iver if I'd one chanct such as your wife had."

She grinned, but her look belied her speech.

"What I'm wantin', Mr. Halsey," she went on, "is what anny woman wants. I want a di'mond star to wear on me head whin I'm sweeping flures. I need di'mond earrings and bracelets to wear whin I'm makin' your beds, you mind; and a silk dress that hollers 'I'm a-comin'!' whin I start out to scrub the steps. Ain't it the truth, Mr. Halsey? Ain't that what ivery woman in the wurld, at laste in America, is wantin'?"

"Sure," nodded Halsey. "Don't forget the automobile while you're wishing."

"True it is! Whut woman of anny social position has not got her awtomobeel to-day? Luk at me. If I had me rights, I'd have me electric bro'om brought to the coorb ivery mornin' for me to go to market; and ivery evenin', after I'd got me sweepin' done, I'd have me long gray torpedy come around to take me and Jim out fer a fast spin up the bullyvard. Me with di'monds on my hair, with rings c n me fingers an' bells on me toes, a-settin' there an' lukkin' scornful. Oh, I was born in Ireland, but I'm American now. The day Jim Sullivan gives me what is me due, and I git me first awtomobeel, 'twill be the proud day fer me—the day whin I'm first fined fer vi'latin' the speed law of the city. 'Tis a great counthry this!"

III

Mrs. Sullivan grinned happily at her romancing; but presently set her broom against the door-jamb and turned to speak more in her real mind.

"Anny woman wants to blackguard a little once in a while, Mr. Halsey, sir, and all women like to lie twice

in a while. I'm just lyin' to you now, because the birds is singin' and the weather is so fine.

"Listen! Anny woman that's goin' to be happy is goin' to be happy because of the stomach she has for eatin', and the joy she has for dancin', and the heart she has for love of her man and her childern. And anny woman that has her heart in the right place is goin' to stand by them and not by herself; and not by anny one ilse. Try me and see if I'm lyin' *now*! You're the boss. Fire Jim Sullivan to-day, and see do I stick with him, or do I go with some man that gives me di'monds, and awtomobeels. I'd stick—and so'd anny other woman that loved her man and her childern."

"I'm glad you think so, Mrs. Sullivan."

"You know I think so! Oh, maybe it's because I wasn't born in this country. Over there, 'tis the woman helps to make the stake. Here, she helps to spend it. 'Tis a fine counthry this—fer policemin. So far as bein' happy in it's concerned, I dunno! Maybe it's the Irish in me that's happy, and not the American. I dunno again. 'Tis all a question which you want to be, rich or happy!"

"Or useful!" ventured Halsey.

"They're the same. Bein' useful is bein' happy. Ain't it the truth?"

Halsey nodded again and Mrs. Sullivan reached once more for her implement of industry.

"Jim Sullivan fits in his job," said she. "He's strong and can hold his job all right. I'm strong, and I can hold mine here, just the same. We've only six childern, and I wish 'twas a dozen. No, it's no trouble to take care of this house, too. I'm only thinkin' of

that little lamb of yours she tuk away with her. 'Tis a mother she nades."

"Please don't, Mrs. Sullivan," said Halsey quietly.

"I mane no harm, and I'm feelin' fer you, me boy, you havin' a crippled child to face the world where even the strong has hard enough times ahead. Still, she'll have money, maylike!"

"Well, Mrs. Sullivan, I'm not sure of that—"

"Of course it's none of me business—of course not. But only look at the sky and only hear the birds this mornin'! You're young, and God may give you two yet the dozen that I have longed for, denied as I do be with only six. You'll be goin' up yerself some day, with all thim rich folks, Mr. Halsey, boy. I'm stayin' here with Jim Sullivan. Whin we can't afford sparrowgrass we eats potaties."

IV

"But tell me, Mr. Halsey," she went on shrewdly, "how long will we be havin' even potaties to eat? Ye don't keep min there in the factory long—there's not many at wurrk now. Besides, there's no smoke in thim chimbleys! And 'tis time. *What's the mystery there, boy?*"

"A good deal of labor troubles," commented Halsey non-committally.

"More than *that!*" she insisted, drawing close to him. "Listen! I mean well to you, boy, and so does Jim. He'll stick. But Jim told me the night that he could walk out, and pick up a clean tin thousand dollars fer the walkin'!"

Halsey controlled himself. This was news of stag-

gering sort. "Why doesn't he, then, Mrs. Sullivan? That's a good deal of money," he said quietly.

"Yes, why doesn't he?—with me half American and gettin' more so aich year,—me a-needin' di'monds and awtomobeels! The fool Irish! 'Tis maybe his ijiotic idea he ought to stick."

Halsey made no answer except to look over at the gaunt factory buildings. A blue-coated figure was pacing back and forth before the door.

"There's Jim Sullivan workin' inside, and there's Tim Carney walkin' beat outside," she resumed; "and the pickets tryin' to break in, and some one *else* tryin' to break in. What's it about, Mr. Halsey? For the company? *What's* the company?"

"It furnishes asparagus for some, and potatoes for others, Mrs. Sullivan."

"Oh, does it, thin? Does it mind that potaties costs more than they did, and so pay us better, or worse, for what we do? If what we eat goes up, we can't live; and if we can't live, them that can has got to support us somehow. Ain't it the truth? What's the ind of it, me boy?"

"I'm not askin' about the justice of it, but about the business of it. If our men starve, what'll we do? Mr. Halsey, sir, we'll raise hell! That's what we'll do! Too much asparagus in this country, and too few potaties, and thim of a bad class, is goin' to raise *hell* in this counthry. Ain't it the truth?"

"Luk at Jim workin' there. And luk at Tim protectin' of him. 'Tis fine, isn't it? I'm thankin' God, meself, there's birds and sunshine in the world. If it wasn't for thim and the priest, I'm wonderin' sometimes what us poor folks would do."

v

"The theory is that some men are born stronger than others, Mrs. Sullivan, and so entitled to the asparagus," smiled Halsey.

"Is it so? Jim Sullivan yonder is strong in what makes a man. In what makes a woman I'm strong. Hasn't God got a place fer us, as well as Mr. Rawn? And if God don't give it, haven't such as us just got to *take* it?—I don't mean the asparagus, but just the potaties?"

"But I've said enough," she went on, turning suddenly. "'Tis only because I'm fond of you, me boy, that I've said so much. There's devilment and mystery goin' on here. I don't ask you what your mystery is, so don't ask me what is mine. Jim's likely to stick, and so am I. 'Tis likely we can be useful in the world, and as for bein' strong, we're strong enough to have each other. And as I was sayin', we've the birds and the sunshine—and the priest! So take your mystery you've got in there, and match it up with mine. L'ave Jim Sullivan alone, and when these two mysteries git together, yours and ours, why, 'maybe there'll be *hell*!'"

Halsey did some thinking when he was alone. He knew now, and had known, that something, somebody besides the pickets of the labor unions, had an eye on this mysterious factory of theirs. He had felt for a long time that there was an enemy working somewhere, that a spy was making definite attempts to get secret information. Now, this unknown enemy was able to offer ten thousand dollars bribe money. The case was serious enough.

It was worse than serious. He had been sufficiently

warned. Why, then, his pipe cold in his teeth, did he sit staring now and think of things altogether apart from the factory? Why did he dream of the birds and the sunshine? Why did comparisons still force themselves into his mind, and why did he long for something life had not yet brought to him—something that Ann Sullivan and her man owned, though they had so little else?

CHAPTER III

THE SILENT PARTNER

I

THERE are men who make a living, sometimes a very good one, through the process of teaching others to do what they themselves can not do. You can purchase for a price in any of many quarters printed maxims embodying full formulæ covering the secret of success; in each case from one who has not succeeded. Nothing is cheaper than maxims, in type, in worsted, or in transparencies. To be in the fashion you should have certain of these above your desk, and should incline your ear to those who profess to teach what can not be taught even by those most nearly fitted to teach.

John Rawn cared little for maxims, being above them, in his own belief, at least. In all likelihood he had never read the advice of the philosopher, to wit: that each man should hitch his wagon to a star. No, he knew something better. He hitched his to a river.

Very naturally, John Rawn selected the largest river that he could find. His silent partner was none less than the Father of the Waters!

There is this to be said about a river, that it is wholly tireless and immeasurably powerful; that it

enters into no combinations against capital, and does its work without unseemly disturbances. Rawn was wise enough to know these things, nor asked any maxims to advise him therein. In his belief it was better to allow this sort of silent partner to furnish the industry and the economy.

II

Who shall measure the power of a river, for ever falling to the sea? How many millions of horses and men has it equalled in its wasted power in each generation, in each decade, in each year? Certainly sufficient to lift the entire burden of labor from the shoulders of the world.

What mind can measure the extent of such a force, or dream the possibilities of its application, if it could be set to work? What equivalent of human brain and brawn could be valued against this careless, ceaseless power, derived endlessly from the air and the earth—power given to the peoples of the earth before the arrival of our present political and industrial masters; given them in the time when the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The minerals under the earth, the food produced in the soil, the waters offering paths and power—before the earth and its fullness passed from the hands of the Lord into those of our present masters, these, it may be conceived, were intended as the Lord's gift to the peoples of the earth. That, however, was quite before the advent of John Rawn.

Toil has always been the human lot. We have carried the mechanical burdens as well as the mental burdens of life on our own human bodies and souls;

although all the time thousands of patient giants were waiting, willing to serve us. John Rawn could see them waiting. He knew to whom one day would be due the power, and the kingdom, and the glory. He could look toward the white-topped mountains, foreseeing the day when they would be put under tribute, because they breed tumbling waters of immeasurable strength and utility. Their heritage of beauty and majesty is naught to minds such as that of John Rawn's. Utility is the one word in the maxims of such as these, men beloved of the immortal gods.

We speak of kings, of emperors, but what emperor in all the history of the world had servants such as these, submissive giants such as these, to work for him? We speak of miracles of old. What miracles ever equaled the business wonders, the money-piling miracles, of the last twenty years in America?

III

Where gat this silent partner of John Rawn's its own tremendous power? Out of the sun and the earth, the parents of humanity. The raindrop on the leaf, shot through with the shaft of the sun, fell to some near-by rill and, joined by other rills, marched on, alive, tireless, tremendous, toward the sea. Even far up toward their source, had your little boat lodged, counter to the current, on some rock or snag, and had you attempted to push it back against the thrust of the downcoming waters, you might have got some knowledge of the power of even a little stream. Ten feet below you, that power again would have been quite as great; and ten feet below that again as great; and so

on, to the sea. It required the advice of no professional maxim makers to teach a few of our great men, our specially endowed superiors, John Rawn first among them, that this power one day must be used. In accordance as it shall be used, the burden of humanity may be lifted from human shoulders, or thrust crushingly down upon them until indeed humanity shall cease to hope. The earth and its fullness are no more the Lord's to-day. They are John Rawn's.

The simple plan of the International Power Company, was to make some strong obstruction inviting the enormous resistance of the Father of the Waters, tantalizing that power into being. Thus, in a manner perfectly simply, this force, once evoked and utilized, would turn numberless wheels endlessly, tirelessly. So much for the material side of manifested power. The essence, the soul, the intangible spirit of that material power was, in the plans of International, to be transmitted by wire at first, and later through the free air. Its sale in definite and merchantable quantities would come as near to the solution of the problem of perpetual motion and perpetual profit as may be arrived at in this world of limitations.

IV

Rawn asked nothing better than this idea. It was beautiful, and he valued it over all his many and various other ventures. He could let his silent partner put other men out of work; and so these could be rehired at such price as he himself cared to set. He saw the time approach when he would be able to retail at a price, remote from his silent, tireless partner's labors,

merchantable packages of power, to feed a cart, a plow, a wheel of any sort; power to lift and labor, to toil ceaselessly *without remonstrance*. It was and is a splendid dream. Its bearing is as you be Rawn or Halsey. That power shall labor for or against mankind as ourselves shall say.

Shall we blame ourselves, or John Rawn, in this republic, that he saw on ahead only limitless personal power, limitless gold, jewels, wine, women, personal indulgence of any sort that appealed to him? Shall we blame Halsey for dreading the issue of these plans, delaying them all he could; clinging to the belief that the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof; and that the Lord gave it to all mankind? And shall we blame the stock-holders for being impatient at renewed delays? The wire transmission was installed, making every man in the International rich. Yet every man in the secret of the real ambition of this company burned inwardly at this enforced secrecy and this unseemly delay. The mysterious factory at the edge of the great inland city still was silent. The directors raged. They wanted to drain to the last drop the strength even of this tireless giant. They wanted to begin to bottle, measure and sell, sell for ever, the very force which holds the spheres in their places! In time we shall perhaps see completed what these men planned. There is no logical reason why, if one planet can be owned by a John Rawn or so, yet others should not!

v

For a long time Jim Sullivan, foreman at the factory of the International, wondered and pondered as

to the real intent of these strange machines which he saw little by little growing up under the uncommunicative direction of the superintendent, Halsey. He had never seen anything like them, with their vast coils of insulation, their intricate cogs and wheels, their centrally-hidden huge glass jars, and the long, toothed ridge, like a delicate metal comb, which surmounted the top of each. There was something mysterious about it all. He was sure that Halsey did something with these machines when the men were not about. The very air seemed throbbing with some tense quality of mystery. The men themselves were suspicious, irritable. Never was the air in any factory more surcharged alike with ignorance and with anxiety. Man after man, good mechanic though he was, quit the place simply because he did not know what he was doing. The feeling of mystery was tense, oppressive.

On one certain Sunday morning Jim Sullivan strolled over to the vacant factory. He knew that the superintendent had spent almost the entire night there working alone on one of these mysterious machines. It stood there now. And—yes! it was different from what it had been when Sullivan last saw it! It was now apparently complete, so far as he could tell. There was no one near it. Halsey had gone home, to bed. Of late he had been very tired, pale, haggard; and he always was at his work in the factory, when good men slept, and knew light-winged dreams.

VI

Jim Sullivan stood now looking at the grim, uncanny machine, hands in his pockets, wondering. He

looked about him, superstitiously. There seemed to be something in the air, he could not explain what. He turned, looking behind him, and tiptoed to the front door, where Tim Carney, the blue-coated guardian, stood leaning against the wall.

"Tim!" he whispered, although there was none to hear. "Come on in here!"

"What is it, Jim?" asked the watchman.

"I dunno; that's why I'm callin' you."

"Has anny wan broke into th' place?"

"Not as I know, but somethin's happened here. I'm figurin' 'twas the boss done it. Come in and have a luk, now. He's gone home."

They stepped gingerly on across the floor, along the row of unfinished machines, and paused at the one farthest from the door, which had excited Jim's curiosity.

"Here's where the boss worked all last night!" whispered the foreman hoarsely. "'Twas daybreak when he come home, an' he was all in. He's been workin' on her before now, I know that. I'm thinkin' she's about done, belike!"

"Whatever kind of a spook joint is this, anyhow, Jim?" demanded the watchman. "What's she for, do ye think now?" They two, bullet-headed, hairy, heavy and powerful, stood looking at this contrivance, whose growth through many months they had been watching. The value of it either could measure in comprehensible terms. It was worth ten thousand dollars to either of them who would—and could—tell a certain man how it was made.

"I dunno what she's for," answered Jim slowly, "but I'm thinkin' it's no good at all. It's the devil,

maylike. Not that she's so big neither. I could almost turn her over with a pinch bar." He pointed to an arm, or lever, which stood at the side of the machine. "She looks somethin' like one o' them drills I used to run in th' tunnel, time Hogan was mayor, do ye mind? Whin we wanted to throw her in we pushed down an arm, somethin' like this."

"Sure, Jim, 'tis you have the head fer machines. I dunno about thim at all," rejoined Tim, scratching his head. "But 'tis a shame we can't throw her in, now. Manny a time I've wondered what 'twas all about in here. Why shud strangers be so anxious as to—"

"She luks like a patent gate in a fince, as much as annything else," commented Jim. "But as fer throwin' her in, how cud we? She's attached to nothin' at all, so there's nothin' to throw her into. She's got no wire or cord runnin' to her, unless belike it comes up through the flure. She looks like she was some sort of motor, but how she's to run I dunno. Now if she was geared to annything, you cud throw her in, most-like, by this thing here. It luks like she was done, and if she is, I don't know why the boss wud go away and leave the roof open over her." He pointed to a sliding window in the roof directly above the machine. He then reached out and swung some of his weight upon the end of the engaged arm or lever. Then, to the joint surprise of the two observers, a very singular thing forthwith occurred.

VII

What happened, as nearly as either of them later could describe it, might have been called a duplication

in large of the phenomena of Halsey's original motor, with which he burst the fan in the railway office at St. Louis. There was a low crackling in the air, a dancing series of blue flame points along the toothed ridge. Then began a low purr, as of a motor in full operation. They could see sparks emitted, somewhere at the interior of the intricate machinery. A living, splitting, crackling roar filled the air about them—the roar of the shackled river, far away, raging at the violence done it! A projecting shaft, fitted with a pulley head, began to revolve, faster and faster, until its speed left it apparently motionless.

Something had happened, they knew not what. The machine was alive! Some force seemed to come down out of the air, to locate itself somewhere within this intricate mechanism. They stood, two bullet-headed, hairy, powerful men, looking at what they had done.

"Do ye mind *that* now?" gasped Jim Sullivan, and wrenched at the lever, restoring it to its original position. The purring of the motor ceased, the blue sparks disappeared, the roar subsided growlingly.

VIII

"What *was* it?" demanded Tim Carney. "Throw her in again, Jim!"

"Not on yer life!" gasped Jim Sullivan. "I dunno what 'tis, but I'll take no chances with the divil an' his works, on a Sunday leastways. There's somethin' *wrong* in here, I'm tellin' you, Tim. What made her go, I dunno. She's under power, same like a compressed air drill—but where'd she *git* her power?—the divil's in it, that's all, Tim. I'm thinkin' the best

we can do is to git away from here. Come, shut the dure—an' watch it. Me, I'm goin' to the praste ag'in this very day! I see now what that felly wanted!"

Jim Sullivan locked the door and left his friend guarding it; then hurried across the street to the superintendent's cottage. Mrs. Sullivan, busy there about her morning duties, would have stopped him, but Jim would have no denial, and hastening up the stairs to Halsey's bedroom, impetuously demanded entrance. Halsey, drawn, haggard, unshorn, greeted him, half sitting up in bed.

"What's wrong, Jim?" he demanded. "Has anybody got into the works?"

"Hush, boy!" said Jim, his finger on his lips. "You need tell me nothin'. But I know what it's all about."

Halsey sat looking at him dumbly.

"Fire me if you like, my son," went on Jim Sullivan. "'Tis true I've done what I had no right to do. Mr. Halsey, sir, *I throwed her in!*"

"You did *what?*"

"I throwed her in. An' she worked—she worked like a bird! Then I throwed her out ag'in an' come away an' locked the door. Tim was there, too. 'Tis none of my business. But I've come to tell you the truth, an' you can fire me if you like! But it's hell, it's harnessed hell ye've got in there. An' others want to stale it."

By this time Halsey was getting into his clothing and only half listening to what his foreman said.

"What kills *me* is, I can't see *how* she works! She runs by herself all the time, chuggin' like a fire ingen. But where does she *git* it?"



•M-LONE
BRAKER•

Halsey made no answer. He was pale as a dead man. A few moments later they were hurrying down the stair, across the street, and through the long, deserted room with its rows of gaunt enginery. They stood before the completed receiver, whose motor so perfectly had caught the power of the free second current from the air—John Rawn's costless, stolen Power.

"What makes her go?" demanded Jim Sullivan. "Fer what is the hole in the roof yon?"

Halsey turned to him. "It's the Mississippi River makes it go, Jim. If we didn't leave a hole in the roof how could the river get through? Now do you understand?"

"My boy," said Jim kindly, laying a large hand on his shoulder, "you're off your nut, of course. I don't blame ye, workin' so long as ye have, an' worryin'. 'Tis a rest ye must be takin' now, or they'll be puttin' ye in the bughouse fer fair!"

"You're right!" said Halsey. "I think I'll just take a little ride this afternoon. Jim, come here and help me. I want to see if we can charge up this electric car. If I can do that, Jim, my boy, I'll be richer by six o'clock than either of us ever dreamed of being!"

Shaking his head dubiously, the big foreman lent a hand, and between them they managed to roll the car into place.

"Want to throw her down again, Jim?" demanded Halsey, motioning to the lever and grinning. That worthy shook his head.

"I'm scared of her, Mr. Halsey, that I am!"

"And well you may be!" was Halsey's comment. He himself threw down an arm on the opposite side of

the receiver. This time the motor did not resume its purring, the shaft did not revolve.

"She's bruk!" said Jim. Halsey only pointed to the blue tips of toothed ridge. "No," said he, "she's only doing another part of her work. The power is going into the auto's motor instead of this. Two forms, you see, Jim."

A faint spark showed at the transmitter connection. "Come!" said Halsey. "Let her work! We don't need to now."

IX

That afternoon, Charles Halsey took his seat at the steering wheel of an electric car which had been charged with power taken from the air without wire transmission. His task was done. He had accomplished what he had started out to do. Throbbing beneath him was Power, the power of yonder distant silent partner, power taken from the earth, and the air, and the water; power of the elements; and power now definite, segregant, merchantable!

Halsey kicked in the gear and rolled out into the street. Pale, preoccupied, he hardly noted where he was going; but found himself half automatically directing the car through a maze of ill-paved, crowded thoroughfares; until at length he reached the West-Side boulevard system. Thence he crossed the river to the East, and headed north. Strong and true, under a limit charge, the motor purred beneath him. The mechanism of the car operated without defect. Nothing in the least seemed wrong at any particular, nor did the car in any particular differ in appearance from others of its humble and inconspicuous class.

X

None the less, midway of one of the large parks along the lake shore, young Halsey suddenly disengaged the gear, cut off his power, and applied the brakes. He was perhaps half way from his home on the journey to Graystone Hall. . . . For a little time he sat in the car, pale, almost motionless, deep in thought; careless of the passing throng of other vehicles, the occupants of which regarded him curiously. Then, suddenly, he threw in the gear again, turned on the current; and, quickly turning about, retraced his course. He had been gone less than an hour when he stood once more at the curb of his cottage near the factory in the western suburb of the city.

"So you're back again, sir!" commented Jim Sullivan. "An' did ye get all that sudden wealth ye was tellin' me about, at all?"

Halsey sat staring at him for a time. "No," said he, "I've changed my mind. I'm going to wait a while."

The foreman turned and tiptoed off to find his wife. "Annie," said he, his voice low and anxious, "try if ye can get the boss to bed, an' make him sleep as long as ever he can. He's goin' off his head, an' talkin' like a fool. Somethin's wrong here, that's sure! Hell's goin' to break loose, in yon facth'ry some day. But whatever comes, the boss is crazy!"

CHAPTER IV

THE BAKER'S DAUGHTER

I

A LARGE part of our ambitious American population is prone boastfully to ascribe its origin to one or other of those highly respectable, if really little known monarchs to whom is commonly accorded the foundation of Old World nobilities. We have built up a pretty fiction regarding so-called blue blood, on the flattering, but wholly unsupported supposition that royal qualities are transmissible to the thirtieth and fortieth generation; so that 'tis a poor American family indeed can not boast its coat of arms, harking back to royal days of Charlemagne or William the Conqueror. It may be. Their Majesties were active, morganatically at least no doubt, much-married men!

But continually there arise disturbing instances to upset us in our beliefs regarding aristocracy. There are so very many worthless aristocrats, in whom the theory of descent did not work out according to accepted schedule; and there are so very many worthy but wholly disconcerting men who are not aristocrats—so continually do Lincolns arise who, claiming nothing

of birth or breeding, show themselves to be possessed of manhood, show themselves, moreover, masters of those instincts and practices which go with the much-abused title of gentleman; a matter in which not all descendants of Charles or William join them.

II

It is well known among theatrical managers that no real lady can imitate a real lady. The highest salaries in ladies' theatrical rôles are paid to ladies who are not ladies, but who play the parts of ladies as they think ladies really would act in actual life. If you seek a woman to carry off a gown, one to assume such really regal air as shall bring the name of William or Charlemagne impulsive to your lips, find one still owning not more than one of the requisite three generations which are set as the lowest limit for the production of a gentleman or a lady.

Continually in our American aristocracy—and in that, *par consequence*, of Europe—we find ladies whose fathers were laborers, shop-keepers, soap-makers, butchers, this or that, anything you like. So only they had money, they did as well as any to wear European coronets, to assist at royal coronations. And, having proved their powers in swift forgetfulness, they offer as good proof as any, of the scientific fact that gentleness of heart and soul and conduct are not things transmissible even to the third or fourth generation, either in America or Europe. Your real aristocrat perhaps after all, is made, not born.

As to Virginia Delaware, daughter of the baker, John Dahlen, in St. Louis, she started out in life with

the deliberate intent of being a lady, knowing very well that this is America, where all things come to him or her who does not wait. In some way, as has been said, she had achieved graduation at a famous school where the art of being a lady is dispensed. She had, indeed, even now and then seen a lady in real life; not to mention many supposed ladies in theatrical life, playing the part as to them seemed fit, and far better than any lady could.

III

The soul finds its outward expression in the body. The ambition shapes the soul. It was wholly logical and natural that, having her particular ambition—that of many American girls—Virginia Delaware should grow up tall, dignified, beautiful, composed, self-restraining, kindly, gracious; these being qualities which in her training were accepted as properly pertaining and belonging to all aristocrats. We have already seen that, put to the test, in the midst of our best aristocrats—those who frequent the most highly gilded and glazed hotels in New York—she was accepted unhesitatingly as of the charmed circle, even by the head waiters. Had you yourself seen her upon the Chicago streets, passing to her daily occupation, you also in all likelihood would have commented upon her as a rich young woman, and one of birth, breeding and beauty. We have spoken somewhat regarding the futility of mottoes and maxims in the case of an ambitious man. As much might be said regarding their lack of applicability to the needs of an ambitious woman. Virginia Delaware would have made her own maxims, had she needed any; and had she been obliged to choose a coat

of arms, she surely would have selected the Christian motto of "Onward and Upward."

IV

The best aid in any ambition lies in the intensity of that ambition. We all are what we really desire to be, each can have what he really covets, if he will pay the price for it. In her gentleness with her associates, in her dignity and composure with her employer, in her conduct upon the street and in the crowded car, in all situations and conditions arising in her life, Virginia Delaware diligently played the part of lady as best she comprehended that; because she had the intense ambition to be a lady. She continually was in training. Moreover, she had that self-restraint which has been owned by every woman who ever reached any high place in history. She kept herself in hand, and she held herself not cheap. Likewise, after the fashion of all successful politicians, she cast aside acquaintances who might be pleasant but who probably would be of little use, and pinned her faith to those who promised to be of future value. Such a woman as that can not be stopped—unless she shall, unfortunately, fall in love.

If there was calumny, Virginia Delaware heeded it not. She accosted all graciously and with dignity, as a lady should. And all this time her great personal beauty increased to such point as to drive most of her fair associates about the headquarters' offices to the verge of rage. To be beautiful and aristocratic both assuredly is to invite hatred! It is almost as bad as to be rich. Miss Delaware allowed hatred to run its

course unnoted. She needed no maxims over her desk, required no ancestral coat of arms. She was an aristocrat, and meant to be accepted as such. In all likelihood—though simple folk may not read a woman's mind—she saw further into the future than did John Rawn himself.

There remained, then, as against the ambition of Virginia Delaware, the one pitfall of love, and even this she easily avoided. Beautiful as she unquestionably was, admired as she certainly was, if there had been fire in this girl's heart for any man, she kept it either extinguished or well banked for a later time. She had gently declined the heart and hand of every male clerk in the office. She had chosen her own ways, and was not to be diverted. Cool, ambitious, perfectly in hand, she went her way, and bided her time.

Cool, ambitious, perfectly in hand, John Rawn also went his way in life. Two more ambitious souls than these, or two more alike, you scarcely could have found in all the descendants of the two bucaneer-monarchs we have named.

v

And Rawn continually found something responsive in the soul of this young woman, something that never found its way into speech on either side. She was the type of devotion and of efficiency. Gently, without any ostentation, she took upon herself a vast burden of detail; and she added thereto an unobtrusive personal service upon which Rawn unconsciously came more and more to depend. Did he lack any little accustomed implement or appliance, she found it for him forthwith. Did he forget a name, a date, a filing record,

it was she who supplied it out of a memory infallible as a fine machine. From this, it was but an easy step to the point where the young woman's unobtrusive aid became useful even beyond business hours. John Rawn had never studied to play in any social rôle. Did he need counsel in any social situation, she, tactfully hesitant and modest, always was ready to tell him what he should do, what others should do. Had he an appointment, it was she who reminded him of it, and it was she who had made it. Were there personal bills to pay, it was she who paid them. She presided over his personal bank account, and there was no hour when she could not have named the dollars and cents in his balance. Did he wish to avoid an unwelcome visitor, it was arranged for him delicately and without offense. Little by little, she had become indispensable, both in a business and a social way—a fact which John Rawn did not fully realize, but which she knew perfectly well. It had never been within her plan to be anything less than that. She knew, although he did not, that John Rawn also was indispensable to her.

Rawn came from no social station himself, and as we have seen, had grown up ignorant of conventional life, so that now he remained careless of it, as had he originally. He made it matter of routine now that this young woman should attend in all his visits to the East in business matters—where, in short, he could not have got along without her. There was talk over this—unjust talk—and much amused comment on the fact that the two seemed so inseparable. Rawn did not know or note it. They literally were running together, hunting in couple in the great chase of ambition. Few knew now what the salary of the president's private

secretary represented in round figures. Certainly she dressed as a lady. Certainly also she comported herself as one. It was, in the opinion of John Rawn, no one's business that he registered himself at the New York hotels, and either did not register his companion at all, or else contented himself with the wholly descriptive word "Lady" opposite the number of the room whose bills he told the clerk to charge to his account.

VI

Never was there the slightest ground for suspicion of actual impropriety between John Rawn and Miss Delaware. Abundance of bad taste there certainly was, for Rawn, without explanation or apology to any, always ate in company of his assistant, was constantly seen with her on the streets, at the opera, the play. He showed, in short, that he found her society wholly agreeable upon every possible occasion. If this was in bad taste, if many or most, in the usual guess, put it at the point of impropriety, John Rawn gave himself no concern. The Rawn aristocracy began in him. He founded it, was its Charlemagne, its William the Conqueror, as ruthless, as regardless of others, as selfish, as megalomaniac as the best of kings. Here, therefore, were two aristocrats! They ran well in couple.

It is not to be supposed that a girl so shrewd as Virginia Delaware could fail to realize the full import of all this. She let the slings and arrows fall upon the buckler of her perfect dignity and her perfect beauty, but she felt their impact. She was perfectly in hand, knew perfectly well her mind, knew perfectly well the price she must pay. She let matters take their course,

knowing that they were advancing safely and surely in one direction, that which she desired. She was more skilled in human nature than her employer, saw deeper into a man's heart than he had ever looked into a woman's!

And then, at last, the life schedule of Virginia Delaware was verified. At last, the inevitable happened.

VII

On one of these many trips to New York, Miss Delaware had been alone in her apartments at the hotel for most of the afternoon. In the evening, before the dinner hour, she was summoned to meet Mr. Rawn in one of the hotel parlors. At once she noted his suppressed excitement. He scarce could wait until they were alone, in a far corner of the room, before explaining to her the cause.

"I don't like to say this, Miss Delaware," he began, "but I've got to do it!"

"What do you mean, Mr. Rawn?" she replied in her usual low and clear tones.

"There's been talk!"

"Talk? About what?"

"Us!"

"About us? What can you mean, Mr. Rawn?" she asked.

"The world is so confoundedly small, my dear girl, that it seems everything you do is known by everybody else. Of course, a man like myself is in the public eye; but we've always minded our business, and it ought not to have been anybody else's business beyond that."

"You disturb me, Mr. Rawn! What has happened?"

"—But now, to-night, now—just a little while ago—I met this fellow Ackerman—you know him—big man in the company—used to be general traffic manager down in St. Louis, on the old railroad where I began—well, he was drunk, and he talked."

"What could he say?"

"He got me by the coat collar and proceeded to tell me how much—how much—well, to tell the truth, he connected your name and mine. If he wasn't drunk—and a director—I'd go down there yet and smash his face for him! What business was it of his? Of course, men don't mind such things so much. But when it comes to you—why, my dear girl!"

VIII

The truth has already been stated regarding John Rawn; that, batrachian, half-dormant for almost half a century, and then putting into business what energy most men put into love and sex, he had passed a life of singular innocence, or ignorance, as to womankind. He had never countenanced much gossip about women, because he had little interest in the topic. The *grande passion* marks most of us for its own now and again, or is to be feared now and again; but the *grande passion* had passed by John Rawn. He was now approaching fifty years of age. Married he had been, and divorced; but he had not yet been in love.

He now spoke to his like, his mate in the hunt, of the opposite sex, a young woman who at that very moment was as beautiful a creature as might have been

found on all Manhattan, a woman known in all Manhattan now as the mysterious "Lady of the Lightnings," the goddess of the stock certificates of one of the most mammoth American corporations, a creature over whom Manhattan's most critical libertines were crazed—and helpless; moreover, a woman who, out of all those in the great *caravansérai* at that moment, might as well as any have been chosen as the very type of gentle breeding and of gentle womanhood alike. But she had not yet been in love.

IX

"I don't understand, Mr. Rawn," repeated she slowly. "What possible ground could Mr. Ackerman have had? You surely don't think he could have spoken to any one else?"

"I wouldn't put that past Ackerman when he's drunk. If he'd talk to me, he would to others. And you know perfectly well that when talk begins about a woman, it never stops!"

"No, that is the cruel part of it."

Her voice trembled just enough, her eyes became just sufficiently and discreetly moist; she choked a little, just sufficiently.

"It is cruel," she said, with a pathetic little sigh, "but the hand of every man seems to be against a woman. Did you ever stop to think, Mr. Rawn, how helpless, how hopeless, we really are, we women?"

He flung himself closer upon the couch beside her, his face troubled, as she went on with her gentle protest.

"All my life I've done right as nearly as I knew,

Mr. Rawn. Perhaps I was wrong in coming to trust so much to you—to depend on you so much. It all seemed so natural, that I've just let matters go on, almost without any thought. I've only been anxious to do my work—that was all. But this cruel talk about us—well—it can have but one end. I must go."

"Go? Leave *me*? You'll do nothing of the sort! I'll take care of this thing myself, I say—I'll stand between you and all that sort of talk."

"Mr. Rawn, I don't understand you."/

X

They sat close together on this brocaded couch among many other brocaded couches. Crystal and color and gilt and ivory were all about them; pictures, works of art in bronze and marble and costly porcelains. The air was heavy with fragrance, dripping with soft melody of distant music. She was beautiful, a beautiful *young* woman. He caught one glance into her wide, pathetic eyes ere she turned and bent her head. He caught the fragrance of her hair—that strange fragrance of a woman's hair. Dejected, drooping as she sat, her hands clasped loosely in her lap, he could see the bent column of her beautiful white neck, the curve of her beautiful shoulders, white, flawless.

The flower on her bosom rose and fell in her emotion. She was a woman. She was beautiful. She was young. Something subtle, powerful, mysterious, stole into the air.

She was a woman!

Suddenly this thought came to John Rawn like a

sudden blow in the face. It came in a sense hitherto unknown to him in all his life. Now he understood what life might be, saw what delight might be! He saw now that all along he had admired this girl and only been unconscious of his admiration. God! what had he lost, all these years! He, John Rawn, had lived all these years, and *had not loved!*

He reached out timidly and touched her round white arm, to attract her attention. She flinched from him a trifle, and he also from her. Fire ran through his veins as from a cup of wine, heady and strong. He was a boy, a young man discovering life. The glory of life, the reason, had been here all this time, and he had not suspected it. What deed for pity had been wrought! He, John Rawn, never before had known what love might be! He was the last man on Manhattan to go mad over Virginia Delaware.

She drew back from him, seeing the flush upon his face, color rising to her own. Indeed, the power of the man, his sudden vast passion, were not lost upon her, different as he was from the idol of a young girl's dreams. But Virginia Delaware saw more than the physical image of this man beside her. She knew what he had to share, what power, what wealth, what station. She knew well enough what John Rawn could do; and she gaged her own value to him by the flush on his face, the glitter in his eye.

For one moment she paused. For one moment heredity, the way of her own people, had its way. For one moment she saw another face, different from this flushed and corded one bent near. It was for but a moment; then ambition once more took charge of her soul and her body alike.

XI

The net was thrown. Silently, gently, she tightened its edges with the silken cords. He loved her. The rest was simple. She saw the world unrolling before her like a scroll. All else was but matter of detail. Above all, she exulted in her strength at this crucial moment. She knew that love is dangerous for a woman, always had feared, as any woman may, that love might sweep her away from her own safe moorings. She rejoiced now to see this danger past, rejoiced to find her pulses cool and even, her voice under control, herself mistress of herself. She did not love him.

But she drew back now apparently startled, apprehensive. "We must go, Mr. Rawn," she said; and would have risen.

He put out a hand, almost rude in its vehemence. "You shall not go! I've got to tell you. Sit down! Listen! We'll separate in one way, yes. You're done now with your clerking days for ever. But you're going to be my wife. I want you; and, by God, I love you!"

His voice rose until she was almost alarmed. She looked about in real apprehension. She turned, to see John Rawn's face convulsed, suffused, his protruding lower lip trembling, his eyes almost ready to burst into tears. She might almost have smiled, so easily was it all done for her. Yet this baker's daughter dared to make no mistake in a situation such as this!

"Mr. Rawn," she began, casting down her eyes, although she allowed him to retain her hand, "what can you mean? Surely you must be in jest. Have you no

regard for a poor girl who is trying to make her way in the world? I've done my best—and now—”

“Make your way in the world! What do you mean? It's made *now*! Look down the list as far as you like. Is there anywhere you want to go? Is there anything you want to do? Can you think of anything I'll not get for you? Look at your neck, your hands—you've worn those jewels almost ever since you selected them, and no one else has, though I told you once there was a string to them. There's no string to them now. The first time you wore them, down there in the dining-room, below, I told you they were not yours, that they were only loaned to you for one night, that we were only both of us masquerading, trying ourselves out! I told you then you'd do; but I didn't know what I meant. I don't believe I loved you then, although now it seems I always have. I know I always will. Those things are nothing—you shall have everything you want—handfuls of jewels. There's nothing you want to do that you shall not do. You can't dream of anything that I'll not get for you! You were made for me in every way in the world—every little way, as I've come to know, little by little, all this time. But now, to-night, it's all come over me at once. I don't know that I planned, when I came here, to do more than to stand between you and talk! But—this—caught me all at once, I don't know how. It's the truth before God! I never loved a woman before now—I didn't know what it was. Virginia—Jennie—girl—I love you! We're going to be married to-morrow!”

“Mr. Rawn,” she said, her voice trembling, “I must ask you to consider well before you make any mistake

—a mistake which would mean everything for—for me. You have no right to jest.”

“I’ll show you who’s in earnest!” he retorted, his hand cruelly hard on her wrist as he forced her back into the seat. “We’ll go home from here as man and wife, that’s what we’ll do. We’ll go from the train, not to the office, but to Graystone Hall. I’ll find a preacher in the morning here. It’s wonderful! I love you! If they want to talk, we’ll give them something to talk *about*! Let them come to the Little Church Around the Corner—to-morrow—and see *us*, you and me!”

He had both her hands in his large ones now, and was looking into her eyes, intoxicated, mad. She leaned just gently toward him. Forgetful of their situation, he caught her in his arms, and kissed her full.

XII

“Mr. Rawn, how could you!” she said at last, softly, seeking to disengage her hand. “It’s like a dream! I have worked so hard, so long. Life has had so little for me!”

“But you love me—you can?” he demanded.

“Oh, Mr. Rawn!” she said, lifting her eyes to his face, then gently turning them aside.

“You do—you have—tell me! Confess it!”

She laughed now, ripplingly, her color rising, and at least was spared that instance of her perjury. John Rawn accepted it as her oath.

They parted after a time, she scarce remembered how, he to a couch which knew no sleep, she to one that long remained untouched.

In her own room Virginia Delaware stood for a long time before her mirror, in silent questioning of herself, her brows just drawn into a faint vertical frown. At last she nodded approvingly, satisfied that she would do. A wave of sensuousness, of delight in her own triumph, swept across her. She stood straight, swung back her shoulders, gazed at the superb image in the glass through half-shut eyes. There was no question of it! She was a very beautiful woman, stately, gracious—and aristocratic. So. It was done. She had won. She caught glimpses of the jewels blazing at her throat. She removed them and tossed them lightly on the dresser top as she turned to call for her maid.

"Madam is very beautiful to-night," ventured that tactful creature when at last she had performed her closing duties for the day.

Virginia Delaware looked down upon her with the amused tolerance of the superior classes.

"You may perhaps find a little silver on the dresser, maid," said she graciously.

BOOK FOUR

CHAPTER I

THE ROYAL PROGRESS OF MR. AND MRS. RAWN

SO they were married. Graystone Hall at last had a mistress worthy of its architect and decorator when—love and affection and other good considerations moving thereto, as the law hath it—the new Mrs. Rawn moved into the place of the old Mrs. Rawn. Thereafter matters went at least as merry as most marriage bells celebrating the nuptials of middle age and youth, of wealth and beauty.

As Mr. Rawn had spent a million dollars to free himself from one wife, he seemed willing to spend much more in the process of taking on another. It became current rumor that the one great diamond show of the western city was Virginia Rawn. The sobriquet, "The Lady of the Lightnings," passed from New York to Chicago and became permanent there. Not that that lady delighted in display; but there were occasional operatic or theatrical events which demanded compliance with her husband's wishes, in which event she blazed almost better than the best.

But, gradually, she showed the tastes of the aristocrat, as alien to vulgar display as to crude manners.

Gradually the tone, color, atmosphere, of Graystone Hall began to change. The porcelains which Virginia Rawn purchased were not large and gorgeous, but a connoisseur would have called them worthy. The vast and brilliantly framed paintings came down one by one, and one by one masterpieces went up, selected by one who knew. The walks, the grounds, took on simpler and cleaner lines. Rawn of the International got a new credit as a person of taste. He was accepted as a collector, a patron of the arts, a connoisseur, in fact, yet more a worthy and a rising citizen.

The hospitality of Mr. Rawn's mansion house also now increased perceptibly, and, delighted that at last numbers came to see him, Mr. Rawn at first did not analyze those numbers very closely. Even the fastidious, many of whom came to be amused, were unanimous in the feeling that Mr. Rawn's house, its furnishings, its decorations, its pictures, its works of art, its hospitality also, were beyond reproach. The trace of *gaucherie* was gone. The spirit of the place was delicately reserved, dignified, yet well assured. The seal of approval was placed upon Graystone Hall. Who, indeed, should smile at the man who had made so meteoric a rise, who had by a few years of labor become master of this mansion, its furnishings and its mistress? Who, upon the other hand, might smile at that mistress, whose appearance upon the front page of the leading journals of the city became now a matter of course—a lady of such reserved tastes as led her to forsake the larger marts, and to set the seal of fashionable approval upon a little florist, a little modiste, a little milliner all her own—even a little surgeon hither-

to unknown, who honored a little hospital and made it fashionable, by taking there this distinguished patient for a little operation?

II

Rawn himself expanded in all this social success. He saw doors hitherto closed, opening before him, saw his future unrolling before him also like a scroll. A hundred times a week he walked to his young wife, caught her in his arms, uxoriously infatuated with her youth, her beauty, her aplomb, her fitness for this life which he had chosen. For once he almost forgot to regard himself as a collector of beautiful objects, although the truth was that his wife, Virginia, became more beautiful each day, more superb of line, more calmly easy in air, more nearly faultless of garb and demeanor. She took her place easily and surely among the young matrons of the wealthier circles of the western city. Whereas thousands of auto-cars had passed by Graystone Hall and only a dozen stopped, scores now, of the largest, drove up its winding walks and halted at its doors. The dearest dream of both seemed realized. The hunt in couple had won! They had gained what they desired; that is to say, self-indulgence, ease, idleness, adulation, freedom from care. What more is there to seek? And is not this America?

Gradually John Rawn had been losing the rusticity which had accompanied him well up to middle age. The city now began to leave its imprint. The waistcoat of Mr. Rawn gradually attained a curve unknown to it in earlier years, so that his watch fob now hung in free air when he stood erect. His face was perhaps more florid, his hair certainly more gray. His skin

remained fresh and clean, and always he was well-groomed, having the able assistance of his wife now in the selection of his tailoring, as well as her coaching in social usage. They always looked their part. At morning, at noon, or at dewy eve, in any assemblage or any chance situation, they both played in the rôle assigned to them in their own ambitions. Born of environment wholly unconventional, they now took on that of conventionality as though born to that instead. You could not have found a more perfect type of respectability than John Rawn, a more absolutely valid exemplar of good social form than his wife, Virginia. All things prospered under their magic touch, the genii of the lamp seemed theirs. No problems remained for them to solve. They had in their own belief attained what may be attained in American life, and they were happy. Or, that is to say, they should at least have been happy, if their theory of life and success, and of those like to theirs, be correct. At least they were what they were—products of a wonderful country which makes millionaires overnight and produces out of bakeries women of one generation fit to be the wives of princes born of forty kings.

III

We are, some of us at least, accustomed to worship such as these as they ride by upon the high car of success, accustomed to envy and to emulate them. If that vehicle be the car of Juggernaut, crushing under its wheels multitudes of those who worship, it is no concern of those who sit aloft. For a long time Mr. Rawn and his wife remained ignorant of the fact that one

victim under the wheels of their success was none other than Mr. Rawn's daughter, Grace.

Alas! for that young lady. She unfortunately had been now for almost a year an aspirant in her own right to a seat upon the car of ease and luxury; yet here she saw herself swiftly supplanted, and worse than that, swiftly forgotten! Her year of quasi-place and power had left her unwilling to return to her own humble home. She remained on at Graystone Hall, now rarely visited by her husband. She found herself calmly accepted, yet calmly neglected as well. Very naturally she hated the new Mrs. Rawn with all her soul; a hatred which that lady repaid with nothing better than a straight look into Grace's dark eyes, a look innocent, calm, and wholly fearless. Grace must now see the very jewels her own mother should have worn, blazing at the neck and hands of her stepmother; must see that lady taking assuredly and as of right, what Grace could now never ask or expect for herself. With an unapproachable and wholly hateful air of distinction and good breeding which rankled most of all in crude Mrs. Halsey's heart, Virginia Rawn sat high on the car of Juggernaut; and the car of Juggernaut passed on. In pride and delight over his young wife, John Rawn really forgot his daughter. The young new wife did the same, or appeared to do so.

IV

John Rawn had told the truth to his wife when first he had declared his sentiments toward her—he never before that time really had known love, or at least had not known infatuated love such as that he felt for her.

He exulted in the vistas of delight which he saw before them, fancying them endless. The very sight of his wife, cool, faultless, self-possessed, haughty, filled him with a sense of his own importance, making him feel that he was one of God's chosen. She was his, he had found her, discovered her, collected her. She was his to put upon a pedestal, to admire, to display, to worship, to load down with jewels. He had something now which other men coveted and envied. He flaunted his ownership of such a woman in their faces. What more can a rich man do than that same? Is that not the dream and test of power—to secure what others may not have, to secure special privileges in this life? And is not the quest of beauty the first business of him who has attained power? Of all these special privileges which had come to John Rawn so swiftly in these late rapid years, none so delicately and warmly filled his heart as that of being able to call Virginia Rawn his own. Why blame him? The sultans of thirty or forty generations have devised nothing better than this test of power.

John Rawn, with all properly aristocratic leanings toward sultanry, lacked certain elements of sultanhood in strength, but had others in weakness. He did not know that in reality he was in the hands of a stronger nature than his own. "She's got him jumping through hoops," was the comment of one young man. "He'll sit up and bark whenever she gives the word!" But Rawn did not know that he was barking and jumping, his tongue hanging out excitedly. In all his mental pictures of himself he fancied himself to be a figure of dignity, of strength, indeed of majesty.

CHAPTER II

FOUR BEING NO COMPANY

I

HAPPY in his newly-found domestic delights, Mr. Rawn was perhaps more careless than otherwise he would have been regarding business affairs, and that at a time when they needed care. The truth was that matters still lagged at the factory, as Rawn ought to have known. Indeed, he did know; but always his curious helplessness in regard to Halsey—who alone knew the last secrets of the most intricate devices of the company's property—continued to oppress him. And always here was his wife to console him and to interest him.

The distance between Graystone Hall and the factory apparently was becoming greater from month to month. Sometimes Halsey came to visit his wife, but these visits of late became fewer and fewer, as that lady became more and more discontented, less and less eager to receive the attentions of him who had so signally failed to place her where Virginia sat in power. This alone left Halsey none too happy himself at the prospect of any of his perfunctory calls; and moreover, he found himself expected now to be more careful in

his attire, in his conduct about Graystone Hall, where full evening dress tacitly was desired at dinner, and where an aristocratic chill was habitual at any hour; things not customary in Ann Sullivan's household on the factory side of the city. Not that Halsey needed to excite social misgivings. He was a clean-faced, manly chap, lean, sinewy and strong, and might, save for his rather toil-marked hands, have passed for any of the throng of young men who at times came under one pretense or other to visit Mr.—and Mrs.—Rawn.

II

These, in company with Grace, he one evening found alone, seated on the wide gallery that overlooked the lake front. He did notice then, as he never before at any time had noticed, a singular truth—Virginia Rawn's eyes seemed almost reluctant to leave him. He was half her husband's age. Moreover, there was something in the somber glow of his eye, in the occasional look of his face—rapt, absorbed, remote, pondering on things not made patent to all about him—which held for her ever a stronger fascination. She wondered if things were known in his philosophy no longer reckoned in her own; but which once might have been germane to her as well. She often looked at him.

The evening was clear and cool, the lake stirred with no more than a gentle breeze. The silver ladder of the moon's light was flung down across the gently moving waters. The breath of flowers was all about. Calm, ease, assuredness were here. The voice of the hostess was delightfully low and sweet. All things seemed in keeping.

Rawn welcomed his son-in-law with his customary largeness of air. "Come on out, Charles," said he, "join us; the evening is pleasant. Won't you have a cigar?" He fetched with his own hands the box of weeds—"Take several, my boy, take as many as you like. I give two dollars apiece for these by the box at my club, and you can't beat them in the city or anywhere else."

Halsey listened almost absent-mindedly, and Rawn returned to his seat near his wife, a little apart on the gallery. The master of Graystone Hall was intoxicated more than usually this evening with her. She sat now in the dim light, a cool, dainty and beautiful picture, in blue and ivory Duchesse satin and filmy laces, gowned fit for a wedding or a ball, as she always was of an evening at home, with just a gem gleaming here and there in the occasional glimpse of light which broke through the windows at the back of the gallery as their curtains shifted in the breeze. At that moment John Rawn would have been glad to have the entire world share boxes of cigars with him. John Rawn, collector—what man on all the North Shore Drive at that moment could claim such surroundings as these?

"I thank you, Mr. Rawn," said Halsey, taking a single cigar from the box which his host had placed upon the near-by tabouret. "I think I'll be content with one. I mustn't get into bad habits; I'm afraid Jim Sullivan and I can't afford them at two dollars apiece just yet!"

III

He moved now quietly and dutifully apart toward the end of the gallery where sat a less resplendent

figure, that of his wife, Grace. She had not risen to meet him.

"Well," said he, as he sank into a seat beside her.

"Well, then?" she answered, and turned upon him a face dour, inexpressive, pasty, almost frowning.

"Is that all you have to say to me?" she began later, as he sat smoking.

"I haven't had much chance yet," he commented.

"No, I should say not! This is the first time you've been here for four weeks! Have you stopped to think of that? You seem to care little enough how I get on!"

Halsey paused for a moment before replying. "That hardly seems fair to me."

"Why isn't it fair? It's the truth."

"Well, I've been busy all the time, as you know. Besides again, when it comes to that, it doesn't seem to me that you've been altogether anxious to have me come."

"You talk as though you worked day and night and had nothing else to do."

"Well, I suppose I could come over—every night after dinner—wash the soot and the cinders from me, get out my four-hundred-dollar go-cart, and come over here to call on my wife in my thirty-dollar evening togs, couldn't I? She lives in Graystone Hall. Where do I live? What do I get out of life, when it comes to that, Grace? When I do come here, you begin to nag me before I get settled down. I always used to say when I was a young man, that if I ever found myself married to a nagging woman, I'd just quit her!"

"What do you mean by that?" she demanded imperiously.

IV

Again Halsey was deliberate, although he half sighed as he replied: "Pretty much what I say, Mrs. Halsey, since you ask me. The truth is, you quit me when I needed you. I have had worry enough from this business at the factory. I don't particularly care to have all other kinds of worry on top of that. You had all this place to fall back on. Your father's taken care of you. But he hasn't taken care of me very well. The fact is, I've been scapegoat about long enough!"

"You seem to have learned the factory ways of talking!"

"Yes, I don't know but I *am* getting rather plain, and common, and vulgar. It's a little different here—even from Kelly Row, let alone our place on the West Side. I fancy you're getting the North Shore accent, along with other things.—It all only means that we're that much further apart, Grace. Did you ever stop to think of that?"

"I've had time to think of plenty of things," she answered bitterly.

"You had plenty of time to think of some of them before you came over here," he rejoined. "You didn't like what your husband could offer you, and you chose something better which your father did offer you. You've quit me, practically. You've not been in our home twice since you came to live here. I've seen that poor baby of ours only once in a while since you left our home for this. You've not been a wife to me. That's the truth about it—I might as well not be married! That comes mighty near being the situation, since you put it up to me to answer."

"Then what do you mean?"

"The courts would make it a case of desertion, if you force me to say that," answered Halsey. "Now, I don't want to live on this way for ever! I'm a young man, and my career's ahead of me! I've got to choose regarding my life before long! And I'm going to choose. I'm not going to let things run on in this way any further."

"That's what my father always said! Your career; your life! Where does your wife come in?"

"You come in precisely where you say you want to come in, Grace. We get what we earn in this world. If you leave me and take up a life which I can't share, if you leave my house and don't care for what I can give you—why there's not much left to talk about as to where you come in. You come in *here*. I belong over there."

"You're selfish! All men are, I think."

"I'm not going to argue about that in the least, Grace, except to say that it's the Rawn half of you that said that. The Rawn half of you can't see anything but its own part of the world. It wasn't the Rawn half of you that I married. You were different, then. You're not much like your mother, Grace! And I married the part of you that was like your mother. She was a good woman, and a good wife."

"You must not speak of her!"

"Oh, yes, I must, and I shall when I like. It's all in evidence. There's the record." He nodded toward the two dim figures at the other end of the gallery. "She's very beautiful, yes, very beautiful!" His eyes lingered on the figure of Virginia Rawn, faintly outlined, cool in satin and laces.

"She'd like to hear you say that!" sneered his wife.

"I perceive, my dear, that you two love each other very much. But as I was saying, you don't seem to me, Grace, to be much like your own mother—you're more like your stepmother, over there, in some ways. Your mother didn't change. She made good—if you'll let me use some more factory slang—on the old ways, on her own old lines. That's what I call class, breeding, blood, if you like—just plain North American sincerity and simplicity. She didn't pretend, she didn't try to climb where she knew she couldn't go. That's what *I* call blood!"

"Thank you! You're sincere also, at least."

v

He seemed not to hear her. He went on. "But you've changed. You dropped me. Your head was turned with all this sort of thing. . . . Since these things are true, are you coming back to me?" He found himself wrenching his eyes away from the cool dim figure far down the long gallery.

She straightened up suddenly, pale. "Back!—to that? To live in that hole—?"

"Yes, just back to *that*, Grace. It's all I have to offer you. Just that hole."

"I'm not happy here."

"Then why do you stay here? Why don't you come back to me?"

"Because I couldn't be happy over there any more, either! I know it. I admit it. It's got me—I couldn't go back to the old ways, the ways we'd have to live.

Why can't you come here—why doesn't Pa give us money enough—”

He turned to her now gravely. “I suppose it's the pace—yes, it's got you, and a lot of others. But I'm not taking that sort of money just yet. And that doesn't answer my question. I've come over to-night to arrive at some understanding about us two. I want to know where I am. There are going to be changes, one way or another.”

She turned to him suddenly again. “What's wrong over at that factory, Charley?” she asked. “Why haven't you made good before this? My father has been on the point of tearing up things a dozen times! He's sore at you—awfully sore.”

“Yes? How do you know I haven't made good?”

“Then why has Pa talked so?”

“For the very good reason that he doesn't know any better than to talk that way. He hasn't got any more sense. He didn't talk that way to *me*.”

“Then you have got it—you've made the discovery—it'll work?”

“Our machines not only will work, but have been working,” said he calmly. “I haven't seen fit to tell your father. I'm going to tell you, however, that all this was *my* idea from the first. If I haven't been a competent manager, let him get some one more competent. I'll take what I know with me in my own head. I'm saying to you, his daughter, that *I* worked out this idea, myself, and all he did was to get the money in the first place for it. For that reason I call this discovery mine, to do with as I like. I haven't been bought and paid for, myself. I don't want money

when it costs too much. I've just begun to understand things lately."

"Yes, I've worked it out into practical form," he concluded, as she sat silent. "Your father never did and never can. He's got to come to *me*, to *me*, right here. Since you drive me to it, I'll just tell you one thing. I've had this whole thing in my own hands for more than eight months! The company doesn't know it, he doesn't know it, no one knows it. I've been just waiting—to see whether I had a wife or not."

"You never told? Then you've been disloyal, you've been a coward! You took his money—"

"All right," said Halsey suddenly, grimly, "that's all I need. I see, now. I know what to do now."

"But you *didn't* tell father!" she went on fiercely. "And we all knew how much has been depending on that factory. Weren't we all in that—didn't we all help, from the very first? Didn't I?"

"Yes, you did, you and your mother," said Halsey. "You've had or will have all you earned. She got divorced from her husband, you may get divorced from me! It's a fine world, isn't it? We've all been chasing for more money. Well, here we are! There's a couple over there, here's another one here. Fine, isn't it?"

VI

"But, Charles!" She moved toward him and laid a hand on his arm. "You don't stop to reflect on what you are saying! If you have that secret in your hands, why, don't you see—don't you *see*—"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, even Pa *will* have to come to you! You won't be poor then."

"I should say he *would* have to come to me!" said Charles Halsey slowly. "Yes, I dare say. I dare say, also, I could make a lot of money whether he did or didn't."

"Listen, Charley. He's got everything, and he wants everything. He's my father, but he doesn't care. He—he sold *me* out. What do we owe to him and *her*? What did he do to my mother? I tell you, he thinks of no one but *himself*. Yet you and I—we who found that idea and worked it out, who have it in our own hands now, as you say—you and I have got the whip in our own hands now, it seems to me."

"You talk excellent business sense, Mrs. Halsey. I compliment you. It seems that you begin to discover something in your husband and his possibilities. It's a trifle late, but you delight me!"

"Well, I didn't *know*, you see," she murmured, pawing at him vaguely, in a fitful and inefficient essay at some coquettish art, grotesque in these conditions.

She was a woman of small feminine charm at best. She sat there now, angular, stiff, unbeautiful, the sort of woman no clothes can make well-dressed. Already she had disclosed somewhat of her soul. What appeal, then, physical, emotional, moral, could she make to him—a student, a visionary, an idealist—at such a moment? And did there not remain that same cool distant figure from whom he had so constantly to wrench his eyes—and his heart? Yes; and his heart! Halsey's face was dull red. He was unhappy. The world seemed to him only a hideous nightmare, full of disappointments, injustices, of wrongs that cried aloud for

righting. Ah, the comparison now was here, fair and full and unavoidable!

VII

"No, you didn't know," said he slowly. "A lot of people don't. Now let me tell you a few things more. You didn't know that something like a year ago your father told me that he'd make me a present of fifty-thousand dollars the day I could run a car from the factory to this place on a charge taken from our own overhead receiver-motors."

"A start for a million dollars!" she murmured. "You get *that*—when you succeed?"

"Yes, that is to say, I could have had that any day in the week these past eight months—if he really has got that much left where he can realize on it. He's pretty well spread out."

"Then you have had it—what have you done with the money?"

"I presume I look as though I'd spent or could spend a mere fifty thousand dollars or so, don't I?" was his quiet answer. "No, I didn't have it, and I haven't got it. I'll say this much to you, however, that I ran my little old car over here *to-night* on a charge taken out of one of the overhead receiver-motors of the International Power Company—a motor completed on my own ideas, and by my own hands. It's mine, I tell you—*mine!*"

"Charley!" She caught him by the wrists, with both hands, eagerly. "You can give me the things I've got used to having! I'll go back—oh! I'll go back—we'll go on together! I hate her so—you don't know!"

"That's nice of you, Grace; but you've guessed wrong. I've not got that fifty thousand yet."

"But you *can* have."

"Yes, I can. What could I buy with it? For one thing, I could buy back my wife?"

"But Charley! We're rich! You've succeeded!"

"No, I am poor, I've failed. I'm just beginning to see how *much* I've failed!"

"If you don't tell me the truth about this I'll do it myself!" she exclaimed fiercely. "You've not been loyal—you've taken pay!"

"Your father took his pay from me," was his half-savage answer. "He's been paid enough! As for me, I don't want any more of this sort of pay."

"What are you going to do—you're not going to sell out to some one else?"

"No, my dear, I'm not going to do precisely what you suggested I *should* do just a moment ago. I'm not going to sell out. I could do that, too, and make more than any fifty thousand. The foreman in our factory, who knows very little, can sell out to-morrow morning for ten thousand dollars, maybe double or treble that now. The watchman on our door can sell out when he likes. We can all sell out, any of us sell out. But we haven't! If there has been any selling out it has been done by those who built this place here—the place which you found better than the best home I could offer you."

She sat back stiff, silent, somber. "You—you never mean that you are going to throw this away, then!" she asked at length. "What earthly good will that do? Pa'll have it out of you somehow! I'll—I'm going to tell him!"

"Try it," said Charles Halsey easily.

She had courage. "Father," she called out. "Pa! Come here—at once!"

VIII

Rawn rose suddenly up from his chair at the startling quality in her voice. "What's that, Grace?" he called across the long gallery.

"Come here, I want you! We've got something to say to you."

Halsey sat motionless.

Rawn approached slowly, obviously annoyed. "If it's important—" he began. He had found love-making to his young wife especially delicious this evening, although he mistook her strange silence and preoccupation merely for wifely coyness.

"It is important!" Grace exclaimed; and rising, clutched at his arm.

"Well, then, what's it all about, what's it about? Come, come!"

"Charley's *done* it, he's *got* it—he's got the machines *finished*—over there—!" Her voice was almost a scream, hoarse, croaking. She stood bent, tense.

"What's that?" demanded Rawn. "What do you mean? Is that the truth, boy?"

"He came over in his own car, under International overhead—he told me so, right now," she went on, half hysterically. "You owe him money—a lot, a pile of money—he told me so right now—it's worth more than any fifty thousand. Oh, we're going to have money too. You see!"

Rawn shook off her arm and half flung her back in

her chair. "What's this about, Halsey?" he said. "Is it true?"

Halsey nodded calmly, but said nothing.

Rawn half-assailed him, his large hand on his shoulder. "*Did you get the current?*" he demanded. "Did you really come over under power out of one of our overheads?"

"Yes, to-night," said Halsey calmly. "Often before."

IX

"Why, my boy, my boy!" began John Rawn. At once he stood back, large, complaisant, jubilant. "My boy!" was all he could say. Not even his soul could at once figure out in full acceptance all the future which these quiet words implied.

"Come!" he explained after a moment, excitedly. "Let's get to the telephone! I want the wires right away! I'll make a million out of this before morning!"

"And write me a check for my fifty thousand to-night?" smiled Halsey.

"Surely I will—I've told you I would—I'll do more than that—I'll make it a twenty-five thousand extra for good measure. I'll have the check taken care of to-morrow at my bank, as soon as I can get downtown! Oh, things'll begin to *happen* now, I promise you!"

"I wouldn't be in too big a hurry to use the wire, Mr. Rawn," said Charles Halsey quietly. "And never mind about your check."

"What do you mean? You're going to try to hold me up?"

"No, I'm not going to try to hold you up at all. If there's any question about that possibility, I can get a million to-morrow as easily as I can any fraction of a million to-night, Mr. Rawn, and it's just as well you should know that, perhaps."

"A million?" croaked John Rawn. "You'd sell us out?"

"No, I said. I'm not going to sell you out, Mr. Rawn. And you're not going to buy me out."

"Of course not, of course not," laughed Rawn hoarsely. "You didn't understand me."

"You haven't understood me either, Mr. Rawn. Now, what would you do if I told you that after taking my charge for the little car yonder I turned about and dismantled every motor in the shop—destroyed them all—locked up the secret, ended the whole game now—to-night? What would you say to that?"

"By God! I'd kill you!" said John Rawn.

CHAPTER III

THE STEP-MOTHER-IN-LAW

I

ON this very beautiful evening, in this very beautiful scene—as beautiful as any to be found in all that luxurious portion of a great city representing the flower of a great country’s civilization—Graystone Hall was a double stage. At the back of the tall mansion house countless auto-cars passed in brilliant procession, carrying countless men and women, personal evidences of all the ease and luxury that wealth can bring; and of these who passed, the most part looked in with envy at the tall mansion house beyond the curving lines of shrubbery, brilliantly illuminated now, the picture of beauty and ease, of peace and content. More than one soft-voiced woman murmured, “Beautiful!” as she passed. More than one man, more than one woman, envied the owners of this palace.

“He’s awfully gone on his wife, they say,” commented one young matron, much as many did. “Not that I see much in her myself—although she seems to have a sort of way about her, after all.”

“Lucky beggar!” growled her husband.

“Yes, they’re both lucky.”

That both Mr. and Mrs. Rawn were lucky seemed to

be the consensus of opinion of the procession of those passing at this moment along the great driveway, and hence looking upon the rear stage of the drama then in progress. But they saw no drama. The evening was beautiful. The spot was one of great beauty. Apparently all was peace and content. There was no drama visible, only a stage set for a scene of happiness.

Yet, two hundred yards from the point of this belief, on the stage of the dimly-lighted gallery facing the lake, the comedy of life and ambition, of success and sorrow, moved on briskly ; moved, indeed, to its appointed and inevitable end.

II

Rawn's voice, harsh, half animal in its savagery, wakened some sudden kindred savagery in young Halsey's soul. In a flash the spark rose between steel and flint. The accumulated resentment of many days made tinder enough for Halsey now.

"All right, Mr. Rawn," said he, his head dropping, his chin extended. "Go on with the killing now, if you like. I'm going to tell you right here, that sort of talk will do you no good. If you kill me you kill my secret. It isn't yours, and neither you nor any other man is apt to set it going again."

"You hound, you cur!" half sobbed Rawn. His daughter stood, tense, silent, unnoticed at his elbow.

"Thank you! Now, I'll tell you. I dismantled every motor, and I'm never going to build them again for you. I meant every word of what I said. Also I mean this!"

As he spoke he rose and struck Rawn full in the

face with his half-clenched hand. The sound of the blow could have been heard the whole length of the gallery—was so heard. An instant later, half roaring, John Rawn closed with the younger man. . . .

The women, plucking at their arms, could do nothing to separate the two, indeed were not noticed in the struggle. As to that, the whole matter was over in an instant. Halsey was far the stronger of the two. He caught the right wrist of Rawn as he smote down clumsily, caught his other wrist in the next instant, and then slowly, by sheer strength, forced him back and down until at last he crowded him into the chair which Grace a moment earlier had vacated. The bony fingers of his hand worked havoc on John Rawn's wrist, on his twisted arm. Halsey was not so long from his college athletics, where he had been welcome on several teams. He was younger than Rawn, his body was harder from hard work and abstemiousness. He was the older man's master.

"Sit down!" he panted. "I don't think you'll do this killing very soon!"

III

Rawn, for the first time in his life, faced a situation which he could not dominate by arrogance and bluster. For the first time in his life he had met another man, body to body, in actual physical encounter; and that man was his master! All at once the consciousness of this flashed through every fiber of him, bodily and mental. He had met a man stronger than himself—yes, stronger both in body and in mind. The consciousness of that latter truth also sank deep into his heart. It was a moment of horror for him. He,

John Rawn, master of this place, rich, happy, prosperous—he, John Rawn, beaten—subdued—it could not be! Heaven never would permit that!

They all remained tense, silent, motionless, for just half an instant; it seemed to them a long time. Halsey at length straightened and turned toward the door.

“I’m going,” said he dully. “Good by, Grace.”

Rawn turned, confused, distracted. He cared for no more of the physical testing of this difference. But he saw Success passing in the reviled figure of his son-in-law. “No, no!” he cried—“Jennie—he fouled me—but don’t let him go—he’ll ruin us, do you hear?”

Halsey was within the tall glass doors and passing toward the front entry. He heard the rustle of skirts back of him and felt a light hand upon his shoulder.

“Well,” he began; and turning, faced young Mrs. Rawn!

IV

“I’m sorry,” he stammered, “it’s disgraceful. I beg your pardon with all my heart. But I couldn’t help it. He struck me first with what he said. He threatened me. Let me go. I’ll never come back here again. I’m sorry—on your account—”

“Charles,” she said softly, “Charley, wait. Where are you going?”

“To the divorce courts, and then to hell.”

“But you mustn’t go away like this. *I’m* sorry, too. Wait!”

Suddenly moved by some swift, irresistible impulse, perhaps born of this unregulated scene where all seemingly control seemed set aside, she put both her white bare arms about his neck and looked full into his eyes, her

own eyes bright. He caught her white wrists in his hands ; but did not put away her arms. He stood looking at her, frowning, uncertain. His blood flamed.

"It's disgrace," he said. "I admit it. I can't square it any way in the world. I'm sorry on your account—awfully sorry!" His blood flamed, flamed.

"Listen!" she said, panting, eager, her voice with some strange, new, compelling quality in it, foreign to her as to himself. "You mustn't go. You mustn't ruin the future of us all in just a minute of temper. You mustn't ruin yourself, or—*me*. Besides, there's Grace!"

"Oh, Grace!"

"But she's your wife."

"Not any longer. She's chosen for herself. She left me and would not come back. I'm going now. I'm on my own from this time."

"Why not?" she asked coolly. "But why wreak ruin on us all? You don't stop to think!"

"Yes, it will set him back pretty badly—" Halsey nodded toward the bowed frame of Rawn, dimly visible, in the gallery's shade, through the tall glass doors.

"Yes," she said slowly, "he's my husband, surely."

—"Who has given you everything?"

She nodded, her arms still about his neck. "Let me think this out for all of us, Charley. Keep matters as they are until I have time to think—won't you do that much—just that little—for me?"

His hands were still upon her wrists as he looked down upon her from his height, his eyes angry, his face frowning, disturbed. Worn almost to gauntness, tall, sinewy, of a certain distinction in look, as he stood there before her now an ignorant observer might

have thought the two lovers, he her lover, not her stepson, she at the least his younger sister, surely not his mother by mixed marriage.

V

As they stood thus, Rawn turning, saw them through the tall glass door. His face grew eager. "He's *not* gone," he whispered hoarsely to his daughter, who stood rigid, close at his arm. "She's got him! By Jove! She's a wonder—my wife, my wife—she'll land him yet—she will!"

"Do you see that?" hissed Grace at last, pointing at the door.

"Do I see it—didn't you hear me? Yes, of course I see it!"

"And you'll allow *that*, between your wife and my husband?"

"Allow it—wife!—why! damn you, girl, what are you *talking* about—wives and husbands?—what's that to do with this? There's many a million dollars up now, I tell you, on those two standing there. You make a move now—say a word—and I'll wring your neck, do you hear?" He caught her by the wrist. She sank into a chair, sobbing bleakly.

A moment later the two figures beyond the door stood a trifle apart. The arms of Virginia Rawn dropped from Halsey's neck. She laid a hand upon his arm and, side by side, neither looking out toward the gallery, they drew deeper into the room, behind the shelter of a heavy silken curtain which shut off the view.

It was a beautiful night. The long ladder of the

moon still lay across the gently rippling lake, which murmured at the foot of Graystone Hall's retaining sea-wall. The scent of flowers was about. It was a scene of peace and beauty and content. John Rawn and his daughter remained upon the gallery for a time.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND CURRENT

I

"CHARLES," said Virginia Rawn, "Charley—" And always her white hand touched his shoulder, his arm, his hand— "You really mustn't go. Believe me, you'll both be sorry to-morrow. You don't know what you're doing! You're only angry now. You'll both be sorry." Her eyes glowed, evaded.

Halsey shook his head. "It's all over, so far as I'm concerned." His eyes, glowing, sought hers.

"Why, Charley, boy, that's all foolishness. Don't you know how wrong it is to talk in that way? What hasn't Mr. Rawn done for you? And she's your wife!"

"He has done little for me and much for himself," he answered hotly. "As for her, his daughter, she left me for him and what he could give her. She liked this sort of thing rather better than what I could do for her. She weighed it up, one side against the other, and she chose this. Most women would, I suppose."

"Charley, how you talk!" Her voice, reproving, none the less was very gentle, very soft. "One would think you were a regular misanthrope. The next thing, you'll be saying that I was that sort of a woman be-

cause *I* live here. Of course, other things being equal, any woman likes comfort. But you seem to think that we *all* would choose luxury to love."

"*Don't* you—don't you all?" demanded the unhappy youth. "Some do, of course. Would you? Haven't you?" He was reckless, brutal, now. The young woman before him started, shivered. She passed a hand gropingly across her bosom, across her brow.

II

There was a strained, very strong quality in the air of Graystone Hall that evening. Thought seemed to leap to thought, mind to mind, swiftly, without trouble for many words. These two at last looked at each other face to face, deliberately, she gazing beneath heavy, half-closed lids, a superb, a beautiful woman, a creature for any man's admiration. He was a manly young chap. He stood a victor, as she had seen but now. He gazed at her out of eyes open and direct. Reckless, brutal in his despair, he now allowed—for the first time in all their many meetings—his heart to show through his eyes. For the first time, their eyes met full.

"You must not ask that," said she quickly. "I wouldn't want to tell you anything but the truth about it." She was breathing faster now.

"What *is* the truth about it? I want to know if any woman is worth while. I'm down and out myself, and it doesn't matter for me. I just wondered."

"I used to see you often about the office," said she irrelevantly, "when you came in to see Mr. Rawn. I rather thought Grace was lucky, then! I was just a girl then, you know, Charley."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Rawn?"

"Nothing. What did you think I meant?"

"I didn't know. I've never dared think much. I supposed everything was going to come out right somehow. Now it's come out wrong. I don't know just where it began. Don't you see, Mrs. Rawn, it's all like a faulty conclusion in logic? It builds up fine for a long time. Then all at once things go wrong—it's absurd, and you wonder why. Well, it's because there's what you call a faulty premise somewhere down close to the start. If that's the case, there isn't anything in all the world is ever going to make a conclusion come out right. I reckon there's a wrong premise somewhere down in my life, or ours, or in *this!*"—He swept an arm, indicating Mr. Rawn's opulent surroundings.

"I'm only a woman, Charley. Maybe I don't understand you."

"Well, I'll tell you. There's wealth, luxury, everything here. Where did they get it? They took more than their share."

"Now you're talking like a Socialist. Mr. Rawn tells me you are a Socialist, Charley."

"I don't believe I am. But I believe a good many would be if they'd gone through what I have. Now, what those two took, they took from *me*—what you've got here you got from *me*. I don't mind that. The big trouble is—the wrong premise about it is—that what they took they took from this people, this country. And there are so many who even are hungry."

"Oh, we'd never get done if we began that way! All success does that way, you know that. Not all can be rich." Her eyes still came about to him.

"Yes, all success succeeds—until that wrong premise comes out. Then there's trouble!"

III

"Are you going to sell us out, Charley?" she demanded suddenly.

"I never sold out anybody. I'm the one that's been sold out."

"Aren't we your real friends?"

"No. You ought to be, but you aren't. The only friends I've got are over there in the factory—Jim and Ann Sullivan, Tim Carney—a few of the working-men that stuck it through. They've killed five men for us over there. Their sluggers are out all the time. As for me, I don't fit in, either there or here. Look here, Mrs. Rawn," he went on, turning upon her suddenly and placing his hand impulsively on hers. "Let me tell you something. I haven't sold out—I'm not going to. Where do you stand yourself?"

Her eyelids fluttered. "Charley," said she, "you know better than to ask me that."

"Yes, I suppose I do," he answered slowly and bitterly. "You stand for this place, for everything that money can buy. Have they made you happy? I often wonder—does money really make people happy? Are you happy?" His eyes were very somber, very direct.

"I wonder if I am," said she suddenly; "and I wonder how you dare ask me. Oh, I'll admit to you I've been ambitious, and always will be. But do you know, some time I'd like to talk with your friend—with Ann Sullivan!"

"Then you'd begin to get at life. You'd be getting

down to premises, then, that aren't wrong—with Ann Sullivan and her sort!"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, well, I reckon you'd only find a little sincerity and honesty, and, well—maybe—love, that's all. Just the things I didn't get myself. Have you?"

"Why didn't you?" She ignored his brutal query.

"Because I'm a theorist. Because I'm a visionary and a fool, I reckon. Because I like to see fair play even in a dog fight, and the people of this country aren't getting fair play. Because I'm the sort of fool that Mr. Rawn isn't. There's the difference!

"Are you happy, Mrs. Rawn?" again he demanded suddenly, since she still was silent. "Tell me the truth. I think you know I'm not going to talk. I'm going away somewhere—anyhow for the summer. I suppose, maybe, this is the last time I'll ever see you—in all my life."

She felt the candor of his speech and replied in like kind, smiling slowly. "No use my lying," she said. "You know I'm not happy. And, yes, I know you'll not talk. Who *is* happy? We all just get on just the best we can. I can take my joy in making other women envy me. Isn't that about what all women want? Isn't that the height and limit of their ambition? Isn't that success, so far as a woman is concerned? Don't they cling to it, all of them—till they get old? I suppose so, but I know it isn't happiness. Yes, I'll admit to you I do miss something." His eyes rested upon her, searching.

Unconsciously she looked down at her wrists. The red mark of his fingers still lingered there. "I'll have to ask Ann Sullivan some time," she laughed.

"One thing," answered Halsey. "She'd tell you that she isn't trying to get the envy of her neighbors. I don't believe she'd be happy in that!"

"Oh, but she's fresh over—she's not American yet, don't you see? She hasn't had a chance—you can't tell what she would do if she were rich."

IV

"There are two ways of looking at it," said Halsey musingly, his anger passing, now leaving him meditative, relaxed. They were talking now as though there were not two others, unhappy, waiting on the gallery near by. "I'll tell you something, if you'll let me talk about myself, Mrs. Rawn."

"Go on; I'm glad!"

"I don't suppose you care for things that interest me. You called me a Socialist. I'll admit that I studied a lot about that, attended their meetings, all that sort of thing. Maybe that made me think. It seems to me that money is rolling up too fast in this country now—we're all mad about money. It's like the big apple with no taste to it. I had it offered me to choose between those two, and I took the little apple that to me seemed sweeter.

"Now, I've perfected that invention. It'll make somebody rich any time I say the word—any time I like that big apple and not the little one—any time I like that success which comes from outside and not from inside. But I've figured that that doesn't mean happiness. Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know. Somehow I believe that Abraham Lincoln, or John Ruskin, or Jim Sullivan, or Tim, or Ann, or Sir Isaac Newton

—any thinking person—any philosopher—would come in with me about this. I broke up the machines.”

“Why—where it meant ruin?”

“Because they’d tighten up the grip of a few men on the neck of the people! I don’t know whether you call that being a Socialist or not, and I don’t care. Change is coming. It’s not the fault of the poor that it’s coming. It’s the fault of the rich. I broke them up—because things can’t go on this way, money rolling up all the time for a few, and life getting harder all the time for so many. God didn’t make the rivers and the mountains and the forests for that purpose—to give them to a few. We’ve got to make changes, and big ones, in this government, or we’re gone. I’m no Socialist at all. I don’t want what some one else has won—if he’s won it *fair*. But the wrong is in our government—the very one of all on earth that meant fair play. We don’t get it—now. Some day we must. I don’t see what difference it makes what name you give the new form of government. There must be *change*, that’s all; or else we’re gone!

“Well now, what they wanted me to do was to give that all to a few. I couldn’t do it! By God! Mrs. Rawn, I faced it and I tried, and I *couldn’t* do it! Maybe I was wrong. Anyhow, here I stand.”

V

“Do you know,” she said at length, slowly, “these are things that never came to my mind in all my life? I never in all my life thought of any of these things. I only wanted—”

“You wanted to win. You wanted what most



American women do—money—station—power—to be envied; that's what you played for. Well, you've won! Look at all this about you. I don't suppose there's a woman in this town more admired by men or more envied by women than you. You've got what you craved, I reckon."

"I thought I had. But now, to-night, I'm not so sure!"

"You couldn't give it up," he sneered, "any more than Grace could, and she couldn't any more than a leopard could change its spots. It goes too deep. You couldn't expect anything different.

"I told you I was a student, Mrs. Rawn," he went on after a time. "I haven't got much mind. But somehow, while I don't suppose religion can change business very much, I think of those twelve disciples and their Master, trying to lift the load off of human beings, trying to lift the people of the world up above the day of tooth and claw. I don't reckon they can do it. But you see, each fellow has to choose for himself. I've had this put before me. I could have thrown in with Rawn—I can do so yet, right here, now, as you know. I can hold him up, as he would hold me up, or any one else—I can take his money—fifty-thousand, a million—I don't think he's really got as much money as most people think. He's in debt, deep. That's all right so long as your credit is good. He has had all sorts of credit—and it depended on *me*—on *my* invention. It wasn't his. It isn't going to be. I've told you why.—But you see, I could make him divide even with me—make him take a third, a fourth, of what I'd won. He'd have to come to terms. He knows that. All right, I'm not going to do it! Fail-

ure as I am, I've got a few ideas which I think are right. Maybe I got them from Ann Sullivan—I don't know! Go ask her about things."

"And you won't put back the machines? Not even for me?"

"Not even for you," he smiled. "Not that I know what you mean by that." He looked at her keenly. His toil-stained hands twitched uneasily in his lap.

VI

"You're talking about things that never came into my thoughts in all my life," said she, with the same strange deliberation, the same strange direct look at him. "But you couldn't expect an ignorant woman to learn it all in one night, could you?"

"I'm not trying to convert you, Mrs. Rawn. I'm going to leave this place. You'll not see me again. But I'm not trying to change *you*. I wouldn't—"

"Listen!" she broke out sharply. "I'm set to do that for you—I'm expected by him, out there, to change *you*. Isn't that the truth? Didn't you see?"

"Yes, it's easy to see," he answered grimly. "It's up to you."

"It's up to you and me, Charley, yes. You can ruin me and all of us by walking out that door. You can break the lives of those two people out there, and mine, yes, of course you can, and your own.—You can do all that. You can make me come down from this place where you say everybody envies me, and you can have everybody laughing at me and forgetting me in less than six months' time. You can get me snubbed, if you like; you can make me wretched and miser-

able, if you like. Of course you can. Do you want to do that?"

"It isn't fair to put it before me in that way."

"I do put it before you in that way. But that isn't the worst of what you could do—you'd leave me unsettled and unhappy for ever if you went away to-night that way—Charley!—"

"What can you mean—?"

"Things are moving fast to-night, Charley, and we're discussing matters pretty openly—"

"Yes," he nodded. "I don't want to set a wife against her husband. Neither must you. But the truth is, Mr. Rawn is not what a good many think he is—"

VII

"Do you think that's news to me?" she asked of him, and looked full into his eyes.

"Good God, Mrs. Rawn! What do you mean?"

"Much what you do!"

"But you loved him—you married him!"

"Oh, yes, surely. That was some months ago. But you see, there's a distinction between master and superior."

"I'm very miserable," was his simple answer. "Things are getting too much confused for me. And now you say you'd never be happy if I left you now, to-night—"

"Then why go, so long as we are so confused? Why don't you wait? I've asked you to! Do you expect to settle all this in a half-hour's time, in a passion of anger? Now listen. Although he's my husband, and she's your wife, I don't blame you. I'm

only asking you to wait a little. I'm making it personal, Charley!"

"How dare you do that, Mrs. Rawn?"

"Because I have the right to do it! I don't intend to have you make me more unhappy than I am. I've just told you I'm not happy. I don't know—" she laughed a little amused ripple of laughter—"but I'd have been happier if he had handled you as you did him! I'm not talking just the way I meant to when I came through those doors to stop you. I'm like you—it's all confusing—I'll have to wait, the same as you. There's a lot of things to be figured out! I'm covetous of *everything* in the world—that *any* woman ever had—from the Queen of England to Ann Sullivan! Yes, I'm ambitious, I'll admit that. And you've set me thinking—I'm wondering—wondering what really *is* the best a woman can get out of life."

"Mrs. Rawn, you've got success as you understand it, by marrying a middle-aged man. You're young."

She shook her head. "It isn't possible," said she frankly, catching his thought. "I'm far enough along to see that!"

"You know what Mr. Rawn did when *he* wished to change—he put away what he had, and reached out for that which he had not. For my own part, I don't see how any woman could be happy with him. He ruined the life of one woman, his wife; of another, his daughter. Now, you tell me he hasn't made an absolutely happy life for yet another woman—yourself. Oh, it's brutal for me to say it, but it's true, and you've just said it's true."

"If only it could come to the question of what a woman really wanted—" she resumed, pondering.

"That's for each woman to figure out for herself, Mrs. Rawn. I've only said what most American women want. We're living in a wholesome and beautiful age, Mrs. Rawn!"

"I thought I was right!" said she suddenly, looking up. "Now I believe I was wrong. Charley!"

VIII

"It's in the air," she said, as though to herself, after a time, finding him silent, troubled, pale. "Don't you know, Charley—" She turned to him.

He leaned toward her now, his lined young face illuminated with sudden emotion. "I wish I could explain that to you, Mrs. Rawn," said he. "I feel it, too! Now maybe we *can* understand! How did I drive my car over here, charged from one of our overhead motors? Ah, that's my secret. But I took it out of the air! That motor of ours was in *tune* with it—the great power that's in the air, everywhere. Mrs. Rawn, it's getting in *tune with the world* that makes you happy. Nothing else is going to do it! Get in tune with the *plan*! All I've ever done in my receiving-motor has been to get in tune with the hills and the rivers and the forests—with *life*."

IX

She leaned toward him now, that on her face which he had never seen there before. He looked her fair in the eyes and went on, firmly, strongly.

"I've done that; and I've said to myself that I wasn't going to throw that away and give it to a few,

when it belonged to everybody. I am unhappy as you are; more so. *I'm* not in tune with life as we live it. No, I certainly am not. But I know that to be perfectly happy we've got to get in tune with the purpose of the world. What is it? What *is* that second current? I don't know. What is it? You tell me—"

"I'll tell you what I believe," said Virginia Rawn slowly, her hands dropping in her lap, her face pale. "I shouldn't wonder if it was—love!"

"And *that* belongs to everybody, not just a few—to every one—not just to the rich men, with money to buy what they want?" He was looking at her keenly now.

"To everybody?" She shook her head. "Not always, Charley."

"Why not—Virginia?"

CHAPTER V

MEANS TO AN END

I

“WELL, he’s gone, then?”

Rawn turned toward his wife a face years older than it had been an hour ago, a face haggard and lined, pasty in color. His bitter agitation was evident in his voice, in his expression, in the stoop of his shoulders—in a score of signs not usual with him. Virginia was even more noncommittal than her wont as she faced him. Grace had disappeared.

“What did you do—how did you handle him, Jennie?” he began—“you were talking for over an hour there! Did you manage to hold things together—will he let up?”

She faced him full now, as he stood in the blaze of the electric lights in the interior of the house, where Halsey had left her, in the chair from which she had not moved since his departure. Every delicate, clear-cut feature was fully visible now. Her lips just parted to show the double row of her white teeth in a faint smile. Her chin was a trifle up, her head high.

“He will wait a little while,” she answered quietly. “At least, I think so.”

“Good! Fine! I knew you’d do it, Jennie! You’re

a wonder!—I don't think there's a woman in all the world like you!" He advanced toward her.

"Don't paw me over!" she exclaimed, drawing back.

"Well, now, then—I only meant—"

"I don't want to talk," she said. "He's gone, yes, and he'll not do anything for a little while, I think. It's enough for to-night—I'm tired. This has been a horrible evening for me. I never thought to see a time like this!"

"Horrible for all of us!" exclaimed John Rawn. "That man took advantage of me out there—I ought to have wrung his neck for him, and I would have done it if it hadn't been for you two women. Of course, we don't want scenes if they can be avoided, for there's no telling what talk might run into if it got out. But just the same, Jennie, don't you see—" and his face assumed a still more anxious look—"he can ruin us all whenever he gets ready, and he's wise enough to know that. I can't do anything with him now. Something's gone wrong with him, and I don't know what!"

II

"No, you don't know what," she said slowly. "I don't think you in the least imagine what!"

"Do *you*, then?" he demanded. "If you do, why don't you tell? Do you know that everything we've got in the world is up at stake on this? He can kill my credit, he can split this company wide open, he can break me in spite of all. See what he's done in return for what I've done for him! Sometimes I wonder if there's such a thing as honor left in the world!"

"So! Do you?" She rose now, and would have left him.

"Well, I want to talk this over with you. Please, Jennie. Sit down," he said. "Tell me what you said. I want to know where things are, so I can act to-morrow—or maybe even before to-morrow. You don't realize what a hole I'm in."

"What did I say to him?" she repeated, looking down at her wrists. "Nothing very much. I told him if he went on he'd ruin us all; that it wasn't right for him to do it. I told him we wanted him—I wanted him—to wait—for my sake."

"For your sake?"

"Yes, I did," she answered calmly. "I said that."

"It was best!" he cried, rising and walking up and down excitedly. "What a mind you have, Jennie—what a woman you are! Where'd I be without you, I wonder now? Why, of course, that was the way! Any man will do anything that *you* tell him to, especially a young man—of course, of course!"

"Thank you," she commented coldly; "thank you very much."

III

He sought to put a consoling or an explanatory hand on her shoulder, but she shook him off, shivering.

"I don't mean anything," he began confusedly. "Get me straight, now. I only wanted to say that when you work for me in this you are working for your own sake also. It's all up to you, Jennie, right now. If you can't land him, we're gone—it's no use my trying to do anything with him. Do you know, I'm *going to send you out after him.*"

"Send me out?"

"Yes; things have to be done the best way they can be done. That fellow can say one word which'll ruin us in one day's time. He can break the values in International more than we can mend in months. Our men would begin to cover as soon as they caught a hint that anything was really wrong. As for me, I'm spread out for millions in the general market. If they began to hammer me I couldn't come through—I wouldn't last a week. The thing to do is to keep this news safe until I can protect myself—until I can protect us all. Now it's *you*, Jennie, that's got to do that—it's *you*! I'm sending you out after him."

"I always thought, Mr. Rawn," said she, "that you played a dangerous game, so long as you simply trusted that he'd do anything you told him."

"Yes, I see it now. But he always was odd—he always held something back. I tell you, he's crazy! Now, he's either just crazy over his fool Socialist ideas, or else he's going to hold out for a squeeze. In the first case you can handle him. In the second, I can.

"You see—I couldn't tell our directorate," he went on; "but there was always something lacking which I couldn't handle myself. *We* need him, and we've got to have him! You can get him, I know you can. You can do anything you like. You're wonderful!"

She sat and looked at him, her lips still parted in the same enigmatic smile which he did not like to see; but she made no answer.

"What's wrong with him?" he went on immediately. "What does he *say* is the trouble, anyway? And is it the truth that he's got the overhead current?"

She nodded. "Of course, I know something about it from my work in the office. Yes, he told me that he had done what you have all been trying to do so long. He said he came over under power from the overhead—just as he told you."

"He may be lying, for all we know. You can't look at a car and tell where its charge came from. Electricity is electricity, to all intents and purposes. What I want to know is, what he's got against us, anyhow, Jennie?"

"Well, for one thing, he seemed troubled because Grace would not go back with him. He seemed to think that you and the life you could give her had been the reason for her abandoning him."

"Why, what nonsense! Grace hasn't abandoned him! And I only got her over here because I needed her myself—before—well, before we were married. Who was to take care of *me*, I'd like to know? And you say he complains of *that*!"

"That was one of the things."

"But Grace would go back! She's none too well pleased now, since you and I have taken charge here. She'd go back to Charley to-morrow if he asked her—why, I'd *make* him take care of her, of course. The trouble with him is, he values his own personal affairs too much. That's no way to begin in the business world. A man has to bend everything to the one purpose of *success*. Look at me, for instance."

IV

She did look at him, calmly, coldly, without the tremor of an eyelid, without raising a hand to touch

him as he stood close by, without indeed making any verbal answer. A slight shudder passed over her, visible in the twitch of her shoulders.

"It's getting cooler!" he exclaimed. "I'll fetch a wrap for you." And so hastened away, obsequious, uxorious, as he always was with her.

"But Charley never would take any counsel from anybody," resumed he presently. "He's always been tractable enough, that's true; never raised much of a disturbance until to-night—I don't see why he cut up so ugly now. He's not crazy over Grace, and if the truth be told, Grace isn't the sort of girl that a man *would* get crazy over. You're that sort."

"Perhaps not," she smiled faintly. "Just the same, Grace's attitude may have started him to thinking. When he began thinking he seemed to conclude that all the world was wrong."

"And he's starting in to set it right! He's going in for the uplift stunt, eh? That's the way with a lot of these reformers! They want to set the world right according to their own ideas. They don't pay any attention to the men who keep them from starving. I *made* that boy—what he's got he owes to me."

"Indeed! How singular! He says that it's just the other way about; that what you have you took from him! He says you want to take more—more than your share—from things that belong to everybody."

"What's that! What's that! Well, now, of all the insane idiocy I ever heard! Good God, what next! Him, Charles Halsey, the man I brought up with me! Jennie, I never heard the like of that in all my time."

"But if that's the way he feels, now's not the time to argue that with him!"

"But, good God, the effrontery—"

"All the world is full of effrontery, Mr. Rawn," she said—continuing to address him formally, as she always did. "It's buy and sell. Everything we get we pay for in one way or another. Even if we took power out of the air by our overhead motors, we'd pay for that, one way or another—nothing comes from nothing—we pay, we pay all the time, Mr. Rawn!"

"*You* don't need to go into theories and generalizations," said he testily. "We've had enough of that from him. We are both practical. You simply get that man and bring him back into the fold, that's all! Do your share."

v

"My share? It's easy, isn't it?" She smiled at him again annoyingly.

"But you can do it?"

"Yes, I can do it. But I can't evade the truth I just told you. I'd have to pay. You'd have to pay."

"We're beggars, and can't choose," said John Rawn savagely. "Besides, there's no harm done—I'm not asking you to do anything improper, anything to compromise yourself—but *get* him, that's all! And when we've got him in hand—when I know what I want to know—I'll wring him dry and throw him on the scrap heap. That's what I'll do with him!"

"Yes, I think you would," she said.

"It's the only right thing to do," Rawn fumed. "He'll get what's coming to him. He's been throwing down his one best friend."

"Are there any best friends in business, Mr. Rawn?" she asked.

"Of course there are. Haven't I been a friend to him; haven't I got a lot of friends of my own?"

"What would they do for you to-morrow, Mr. Rawn?"

"Well, that's a different matter; they might take care of themselves—I would take care of myself. But this fool here that I'm asking you to handle isn't taking care of himself or any one else. He's *crazy*, that's all about him! Did he hand you out any of this talk about the rights of man? I more than half suspect him of sympathizing with these labor unions. He's a Socialist at heart, that's what he is!"

She nodded her head a little. "Names don't make much difference in such matters."

VI

"Isn't it a funny thing," he rejoined, turning to her in his walk, "that the very men who have failed, the very ones who most need help themselves, are the ones who are out to help everybody else! The blind always want to lead the blind! These labor unions depend on us for their daily bread and butter, yet they want to fight us all the time. There's no trust in this country so big as the labor trust, and there's no ingratitude in the world like that of the laboring man's."

"Why, look at me, Jennie—you know something of my plans. This very month I was going to put fifty thousand dollars more into my coöperative farm in the South, a thing I have been working out for the benefit of my laboring people. I'm going to do more than old Carnegie has done! You and I ought to have set up some kind of prizes, medals—start some sort

of hero competition. Helping colleges is old, and so are libraries old. I don't place myself any station back of Rockefeller himself. The Rockefeller Foundation was a great idea. Just wait! I'll raise him out of the game! When I get all my plans made, they'll speak of John *Rawn* when they mention philanthropy!

"And just to think, Jennie," he went on excitedly, "that all such big plans as that, plans for the good of humanity, should come to nothing! To be held up and handicapped by the folly of a man who has never been able to do anything for himself or any one else! It makes me sick to think of it. He claims to be a friend of the laboring people, and here he's tying the hands of the greatest friend of the laboring men in this town to-day—myself, *John Rawn*, standing here! Why, if I'd hand this country the John Rawn Foundation for industrial assistance, all thought out, all financed, all ready to go to work to-morrow, that crazy fool there, with his Socialist ideas, would block it all. He's *going* to block it all.

"Now, it's up to you. You're the only one that can keep him from doing that very thing. Don't you see, it isn't just you and me he's ruining. It isn't himself he's ruining. He's going to hurt the whole *country*. Jennie, there's a considerable responsibility on you to-night. Where he is wrong is in thinking that the weak can help the weak. It's the other way about—it's the strong that can help—Power!—that's what counts! It's for you to show him that. Jennie, girl—it's not so much myself. But think of your country."

"Yes," she nodded, "that's precisely it!"

"But he didn't affect *you* in the least, Jennie—he didn't get *you* going with that kind of foolishness."

"I never heard any one talk just as he did, before," said she slowly. "You see, I hadn't thought of these things myself, for I'm only a woman. He said that all this power, taken from the hills and the forests and the air and the rivers, belongs to *everybody*—to all the world—"

"But he didn't impress *you* with that nonsense, Jennie?"

"He said things—I told him that I'd never thought of life just that way. And I haven't, Mr. Rawn. I told him, as I admit to you, that I hadn't thought of anybody much but myself—I just tried to climb. I think all women do."

"It's right they should, it's the only way. Selfishness is the one great cause of the world's progress, my dear."

"Well, I told him that his way of thinking was so new to me, that I needed time to think it over."

"But you didn't believe a word he said—you never would!"

VII

"Mr. Rawn," said she, looking him full in the face, "we've both of us climbed pretty fast. I always put my family out of memory all I could. But somehow I seem to recollect that my father used to talk of things a good deal as Mr. Halsey does. I begin to realize what I told you a while ago—no matter how or where we climb, we pay for what we get, sometime, somewhere, somehow!"

"But listen," she leaned toward him with some sudden access of emotion. "I can do this much! I'll agree

to bring in Charley Halsey, bound hand and foot! You can throw him and me, too, on the scrap heap when the time comes! It's a game. I'll play it. I'll take my chance." She half rose, thrilling, vibrant.

"I knew you would, Jennie."

"Yes, but you'll have to pay."

"Have I ever said I wouldn't? Didn't I just get done telling him I'd make him rich the minute he said the word?"

"It doesn't seem to be money he wants. I—don't—believe—that's what the pay would have to be."

"What do you mean? You're getting too deep for me now. I'm only a plain man, my girl!"

She smiled at him, still enigmatic, still cool and calm, still almost insolent, as she often was with him. "He's been talking all sorts of folly about getting things in tune—getting gravitation in tune with labor—all sorts of abstractions. Well, don't you see, if I got in tune with his notions, I might be able to influence him!"

Raw'n grew cold and hard. "There's one thing we can't do, Jennie," said he. "We can't side in with any of his socialistic talk. What *he* wants to do is to give to the people of this country for nothing what this International Power Company is planning to *sell* them for ever. What *we* want is monopoly! I've been gambling everything I've got on the certainty of that monopoly. I'm in soak, in hock, up to my eyes on the market, this minute. I'm margined to the full extent of my credit. The biggest men of America are back of me. I'll be rich if this thing goes through—one of the richest men in America. But I'd almost rather lose

it all than to see you side in with him, or listen for five minutes to his rotten talk about the 'rights of man.' There *are* no rights of man except what each man can take for himself! As for him, I'd kill him, or get him killed, if I knew first how he got that current through the receivers. Give me that, and I'll let the rights of man wait a while. I'll show them a thing or two!

"But of course," he added, frowning again in helpless perturbation, "we've got to get him in hand. Grace couldn't do it."

"No; on the contrary. I can—if I pay!"

"*Then pay!*" he snarled suddenly, his voice harsh, half choking. "What's the price—nothing worth mentioning. But it's got to be paid, no matter what it is. We're caught, and we're squeezed! We've got to pay, *no matter what it is*, Jennie!"

"Is it no matter to you, Mr. Rawn?"

"How can it be? I'm almost crazy to-night! Do it, that's all, and draw on me to the limit!"

"To the limit, Mr. Rawn?"

"*To the limit!*" He looked her straight in the eye, and she met his gaze fully. She shivered slightly again, but her delicately clean-cut face showed no further sign. Only she shivered, and pulled her wrap a trifle closer about her shoulders.

"Very well," she said. "I may have to draw on you—and myself, too."

"It's all in the game, Jennie—we've got to play it together—we're two of the same sort—we've got to climb, to succeed. We run well together. One must help the other's hand."

"Yes, it's a game," she answered; and so rose, and left him without further word.

VIII

John Rawn followed her up the stair, mumbling some sort of conjugal affection, but she left him at the landing and passed toward her own apartments down the hall, giving him hardly even a look of farewell. He followed her with his eyes, standing a little time, his hand resting on the lintel of his own door.

Alone, Rawn seated himself in the Elizabethan arm-chair devised by his most favored decorator as fitting for this Elizabethan room. A vast oak bed, heavily carved, with deep and heavy curtains, represented the decorator's idea of what the Virgin Queen preferred. The walls were deeply carved in wainscot and cornice. A rude attempt was made at strength and simplicity in this, the sanctum of the master of Graystone Hall. Granted the aid of a lively imagination, this might have been the apartment of some feudal lord of another day; as the designer and architect had not failed delicately to suggest to Mr. Rawn.

It is possible that in the time of Elizabeth pier glasses with heavily carved frames were not common in the size affected by Mr. Rawn in his private apartment. He stood before the great glass now and gazed at what he saw; a face haggard and lined, shoulders stooping a little forward, body a little stooped, a little heavy, a little soft; the watch charm hanging in free air—the figure of a man no longer athletic, if ever so.

Rawn stood engaged in his regular nightly devotions—he made no prayers of eventide beyond that to his mirror. But now something he saw caused him to fling himself into a seat at a smaller glass, where the light was better. He gazed into this also, intently. Something seemed strange about his eyes, about his

mouth. He turned his face slightly sidewise and studied the deep triangular lines at the corner of the chin. He saw a roll of fat at the back of his neck, and observed a certain throatiness, a voluminousness of flesh below the chin. The latter stood out distinct, pushing forward;—the rich man's chin, the old man's chin. He lifted a finger and touched the arteries on his temples. They were firmer to the touch than once they had been. He looked at the veins on his hands, and realized that they stood fuller than was once the case. His nose, large, just a trifle bulbous, seemed to him to have gained somewhat in color in late years. He looked at his eyes in eager questioning. Yes, they belonged to him! But for some reason they lacked brilliance and fire. They were colder, less impressive, less responsive;—the rich man's eyes, the old man's eyes. He looked at his hair, now almost white at the temples. He hesitated for a moment, then picked up a hand glass and deliberately turned his back to the mirror. Yes, it was there, a shiny spot of naked epidermis. He knew that, but always he shunned the knowledge and the proof. For many years his thick mane of wiry hair had been his pride.

John Rawn turned and put the hand mirror on the dresser top again. He looked full into the glass at his image once more. His pendulous lower lip drooped, tremulously. He saw his eyes winking. He saw something else. Yes, to his wonder, to his gasping horror, he saw something strange and revolutionary! A tear was standing in the corner of his eye! It dropped, it trickled down his cheek.

John Rawn for the first time in his life was learning what the one game is—and learning that time is the one winner in that one game! He was old.

CHAPTER VI

AN INFORMAL MEETING

I

IT must surprise those simple folk, Messieurs Washington, Jefferson, and their like, were they to return to life at this advanced day and gaze upon the admirable republic which they fancied to be founded on immutable principles. As in politics to-day those principles would seem proved to have been not quite immutable, so, in commerce, men and methods would appear wholly different from those known in that earlier day. For instance, in commercial matters, the men of that day would now find in daily application a fourth dimension of affairs once wholly unknown; the sixth sense of the modern business man, a delicately differentiated faculty evolved in the holy of holies where events cast their financial shadows far in advance of themselves. John Jay, or any financier of Revolutionary time, very likely lacked in that regard, and had but his five senses.

This keen sense of prophecy, property of modern leaders in finance, was not lacking in the case of the directors of the International Power Company, all and several; and more especially several. Capitalists hunt in packs—but only up to a certain point. The *sauve*

qui peut has small chivalry about it even in the holy of holies.

Within a few days after the turbulent scenes which took place in the quiet surroundings of Graystone Hall, there was held, quite informally, indeed on a wholly impromptu basis, a meeting of the greater portion of the directors of the International Power Company. It was a meeting not called by the president, and the president knew nothing of it. It was not set for the usual headquarters in the East; on the contrary, by merest chance, these keen-witted men met by accident in the western city where were located the works and central operating offices of the International Power Company. They made their stopping place, as usual, at the National Union Club, where they were less certain to become the prey of prying reporters—a breed detested above all things by these and their like.

II

There was, this afternoon, casually present, a certain gray-haired, full-bodied man, of full beard and rather portly body. He was speaking with President Standley, of St. Louis, who also by merest chance happened to be in town. To them presently came the former general traffic manager of Mr. Standley's road, Ackerman, also present by merest accident. Two or three others, moreover, by mere accident, joined them, figures which were familiar at the long table in the New York headquarters. They looked at one another frankly, and laughed without much reservation.

"Well," said Ackerman, after a time, "let's sit down and have a little powwow—informally, you know."

The gray-haired man grinned pleasantly again and said nothing, but drew up a chair.

"Of course, you know," said Standley, as he seated himself, "that our dissatisfied friend, Van, is here in town to-day?"

The full-bearded man nodded, and an instant later jerked his head toward the door. "He's here in the club, too," said he, and smiled. "Just happened in, I suppose." Indeed, as they turned to look they saw advancing, talking animatedly, a rather slender, youngish man of brown eyes and pointed beard; none less than the disgruntled director who had long ago been so summarily handled by John Rawn, president of the International Power Company.

"Hasn't he got the nose for news, though?" commented Standley admiringly. "Now, who told *him* there was anything doing!"

"He didn't need to have anybody tell him," growled Ackerman. "He can take care of himself. And by Jove! I'm half inclined to think that he was the lucky one—to get out the way he did, and when he did."

"Yes, he's lucky," said Standley gravely. He turned to see the vast round belly of the gray-bearded man heaving in silent mirth. The railway magnate obviously was amused.

"I don't know!" remarked Ackerman suddenly. "*Others*, eh?"

III

"Well, boys, why not admit it?" rejoined the older man. "We all know the facts. We all know why we're here. As you said, Ack, let's hold a little informal meeting, and talk over what we had better do!"

"How much did you sell!" demanded Standley casually.

"Twenty thousand last week. You sold about double that."

"Yes, it's leaking out, no use denying that! You don't need to list this thing—it leaks!"

"Of course, Van's buying it," said Standley, nodding toward the slender figure of the ex-director. "First time I ever knew him to go out for revenge. It doesn't very often pay."

"Well, I can't figure it out," ventured Ackerman. "The stock won't do him any more good than it does us. He can't get the control over that old bonehead Rawn—I mean our respected president—anyhow, any more than we can. He's sitting tight, with the papers in his box. I admit that I let go a little, because I figured it was time we were doing something better than six per cent. with that stock, and all Rawn has done is to make one explanation on top of another. He can't keep on putting that across with me, anyhow. But he can sit there, as I say, with the control in his hands, looking at those nice pictures of the Lady of the Lightnings, which he had engraved as our trademark."

"He's awfully gone on her," spoke up one. "Not that I blame him, either. I hate to sell my stock, because I like the looks of our engraved goddess so much!"

"There's most always a lady standing around somewhere, with the lightning in her hands," ventured the gray-bearded man solemnly. They looked at one another again suggestively, but no one spoke more definite words than that.

IV

"Well, we've had high-sounding talk put up to us about long enough," commented Ackerman, at length. "I was one of the first to go in for this, and I believe in it yet, but I don't want this thing with Rawn in control. Why, look at him,—he was just a clerk when he came to us, and here he's putting on more side than any other man in the town. He's taken advantage of his situation to play the market in and out, all the time, which he couldn't have done if it hadn't been for friends like us. He squeezed us into backing him—after we gave him that first little flyer in Rubber, and some Oil—that hadn't cost us anything and didn't look worth anything. In return he's handed us promises and explanations and hot air, and nothing else. I've just got an idea that there's a man-sized nigger somewhere around this woodpile. For me, I prefer being hung as a little lamb rather than as a full-sized goat. Yes, I let go a little International—to Van—I'll admit. Time enough to get back into the game when we've put Rawn out!"

Standley nodded slowly. "That's a good deal the way I felt about it," he said. "It riles me to see the airs that fellow puts on. I remember him when he didn't have two suits of hand-me-down clothes to his name, and now he seems to have a hundred, all done by the best tailors in New York. He used to tie his drawers with white tape strings, and now he wears specially shaped silks. Where'd he get it? You talk about the Keeley motor—this thing has got it beat a mile for mystery. And we fellows have been stand-

ing for that! That is, unless we can stand from under, somehow."

"Yes, seemingly," ventured the last speaker. "But how is that somehow? There isn't any market for International."

The gray-bearded man laughed jubilantly at this. "Have you found that out?"

"Yes, I certainly have found it out. Of course, the market has been Van yonder. But he won't take on over a certain amount. He wants to break the control, of course. But he's going to wait until he gets up to the point and then do something quick. He's not going to hold our bag for us—oh, no! Not him!"

"Well, I've a suspicion," said the older man finally, "that that secret we've been after has been in the hands of our superintendent for a long time."

"Why didn't Rawn tell us, then?" demanded one of his companions. "Has he sold us out?"

"No, Rawn hasn't sold us out. At least I don't think so."

"Who has, then?"

"I don't know. The young man who made the wheels go for us whenever Rawn wanted him to—he's the real key to this situation, if I'm a good guesser. There's your contraband, and you can locate him somewhere in this particular woodpile, or I'm no judge."

"Rawn's pretty well spread out in the general market," quite irrelevantly suggested Standley.

"I should say he was!" growled Ackerman. "He's been in on all the good things in the last two or three years. He must have made millions—I don't know how much."

"In the general market—not International, of course. He's got all his holdings in that. He has been spending money, though!" Standley wagged his head.

"For instance, on the Lady of the Lightnings?" suggested Ackerman, grinning amiably.

"Yes, on his young wife, and his new house, and his boats, and his automobiles, and all the regular things. He can't have done it out of International dividends, that's sure!"

"All the better that he hasn't," ventured Standley. The old man nodded.

"Go over there and call Van," he said simply.

v

The slender man with pointed beard came up pleasantly, his eyes twinkling. "Well, my fellow sports and department heads!" he said. "What's the good word this morning?"

"Sit down," said the gray-bearded man. "We know why you're here, and why you've been hanging around here for the last six months. It's foolish of you, son, to be out for revenge—nothing in that!"

"I'm not after revenge," smiled the other, his eyes still twinkling. "I've made my peace!"

"Yes," commented Ackerman. "The friendship of some of you gladiators is surely a wonderful thing! Rawn hates you, and you hate Rawn. Don't your ears burn?"

"No, my heart!" He laid a hand on that organ with mock gravity.

"What could you do with the Lady of the Lightnings, Van?" asked Standley discreetly.

"Nothing, absolutely nothing."

"Hasn't she any social instincts?"

"Plenty, but all gratified; that's the trouble. There isn't anything those people want that they haven't got. No, I must say his position is pretty strong."

"But it's not impregnable, Standley," cut in the gray-bearded man, stopping the twiddling of his fingers above his round-paunched body. "Now, look here, we're all friends together, when it comes to that. You belong with us a lot more than you do with that Jasper from the country. Of course, you split with us, got mad, took your dolls and all that sort of thing—we're all used to that—and we all sat tight because it looked good. It looked better than it does now. So, we're friends again."

"Of course," nodded the slight man. "I understand that."

"Sure you do! Now, it's plain that when it comes to being on the inside, you're there as an ex-director just as much as we are as real directors—maybe more so, for all I know."

"Maybe more, yes, that's so," smiled the slender man, his brown eyes twinkling yet more.

"How much more, then?"

"Why, a whole lot more!"

"What do you know?"

"I know what I've learned for myself and by myself. Gentlemen, it's on the table! Play the game! I did. I've had some of those college professors at work for me—they're the people that first got us locoed, anyhow. Rawn, or rather his son-in-law, got his first notion from his own professor in his college."

VI

"The real trouble with business to-day," interrupted the gray-bearded man, reverting to his universal and invariable grievance, "is that things are all going wrong with the American people. These Progressives down there at Washington have set this whole country by the ears—not even the Supreme Court can square things any more. The suspiciousness of the average man is getting to be almost criminal, that's what it is. The public thinks every man with money is a rascal. The public is damnably ungrateful. Look what we have done for this country, this little set of men sitting right here—what we've built for them, what we've paid out to them for wages! What are we getting in return? They envy us our daily bread, and by the Eternal! they'll come near putting us where we can't get that much longer! Look at the railway rate cases—it's robbery of the railways. Capital hasn't any chance any more! The public seems to be getting ready for anarchy; that's all."

"Isn't it the truth?" remarked the slender man sympathetically. "Still, we have to handle men as we find them, my friends. In my own case, I've been fighting the devil with a little of his own fire."

"How's that?"

"Well, for instance, I went out to see if I couldn't land that little secret of the receiving motor myself, as I just told you. If International doesn't want to take me in, or if I can't break in, maybe there can be another company formed—there's considerable corporation room left in New Jersey. You folks on the In-

ternational have been having your own troubles with labor, haven't you?"

"Well, rather!" growled Ackerman. "We put that up to old Colonel J. R. Bonehead, our president! He seems to have got in about as nearly wrong as any one could with our esteemed friends of the labor unions!"

"Naturally; well, I'll make a confession, since we're all friends together—I've had men conferring with your horny-handed citizens and suggesting that the International Power Company was 'unfair,' and a bad outfit to work for!"

"That was nice of you!" growled Ackerman, getting red in the face. "*Fine* business, for you to come snooping around our works."

The slender man smiled at him pleasantly. "How else could I get information?" he inquired. "You must remember that I'm no longer on the board! But you must remember, also, that of late I have picked up an occasional dollar's worth of International. I wanted to know how about certain things!"

"Well, how about them, then?" demanded Standley fiercely. "Where do we stand?"

"You want me to incriminate myself!"

"Oh, fiddlesticks about incrimination! Cut out that part of it!"

"All right, I will," said the other grimly. "Well, then, I've tried my best to bribe your people, and I've got little out of it. I've tried the foreman, the night watchman, and everybody else. I've had a dozen of your workmen slugged for scabbing, and four or five of them shot, one or two at least, for a good, permanent funeral. And I paid the funeral expenses! You didn't know that? Well, that's the truth of it!"

"Well, *what* do you know about *that!*" gasped Standley, aghast.

"I know a good deal about it, my Christian friend," said the slender man relentlessly. "I can tell you what you already know, that your motors are dismantled to-day. I can tell you also that there's a very good chance that the secret we've been after is in the hands of one man, and he's holding it up for some reason best known to himself. We've got nothing on him! I can also tell you that if he won't give up—though *why* he won't, I can't imagine—it's possible we can work out a receiver of our own elsewhere, without him."

VII

"Well, what does he want?" This from the old man.

"That's the everlasting mystery and puzzle of it. He doesn't want anything, so far as I can learn. There's some factor in him that I can't get my hands on, try the best that I can. Not that I don't expect to break you wide open eventually, my friends."

"Now why do you want to do that?" asked the older financier. "Why not join in with us and break the bonehead?"

"Fine! But how can we do that? He's sitting pretty tight. The man's played in fine luck. I admit I rather admire him."

"Bah, that's the way with all the new ones; they all play in luck for a time. Each Napoleon has his boom, but after a time boom values shrink—they always do. This chap'll find his level when we get ready to tell him."

"For instance?"

"Well, for instance, then! He's sitting there with a small margin of control in the International. That gave him his start, and he's wise enough to hang on to that. But it didn't give him his money—he's only made dividend money out of that; and who cares for dividend money? He doesn't own control in the Guatemala Oil Company, does he? He's made a lot out of Arizona and Utah coppers, but he doesn't own control in a single company there, does he? He's in with the L. P., but he borrowed to get in. He's made a big killing in Rubber, but he doesn't own any Rubber control of his own, does he? Now, you follow him out in every deal he's made—iron, copper, steel, oil, rails, timber, irrigation, utilities, industrials—and you'll find he's simply been banking on his inside information and his outside credit. Who gave him both of those things?—Why, *we* did, didn't we? All right! Suppose we withdraw our credit. What happens?"

VIII

They went silent now, and grouped a little closer about the tabouret which stood between them. The old man's voice went on evenly, with no excitement. Their conversation attracted the attention of none in the wide lounging room, where large affairs more than once had been discussed—even the making of Senators to order.

"I'll tell you what happens," the old man resumed. "He quits using us for a stalking horse, and he comes down to his own system. He's spread out. Banks are all polite, but—well, he has to put up collateral; and

then some more. If he doesn't want to put up International, he's apt to find that a bunch of automobiles is poor property when sold at twenty per cent. their cost. He turns off two or three butlers, but still that doesn't serve for margins. The market doesn't suit his book any more.

"He's discovering now the great truth of something my old friend Emory Storrs used to say—Emory always was in debt, or wanted to be, and says he: 'There's no trouble about prosperity in this country; there's plenty of money—the only trouble is in the confounded scarcity in *collateral*.' Well, he goes over to this young man, who is standing out for some reason best known to himself, and he tries to get him to come through, and he doesn't come through. What's left? Why, the diamond lightnings of the Lady of the Lightnings—and his International Power stock.

"Meantime, all this thing can't be kept entirely secret; that is to say, the market part of it can't be. But we sit tight, all of us. We hold our regular directors' meetings of the International board, and we smile, and look pleasant. We don't know a thing about his hot water experiences in the open market. He explains to us why this and that happens, or doesn't happen, in International; and we smile and look pleasant, and we don't know a thing. After a time it's up to him and the Lady of the Lightnings. Something pops! He's up against it, all except his International Power. Then Van, and you, Standley, and you, Ack, and you, and you and I, and all of us—why we're still pleasant as pie to him and we say, 'Well, Mr. John Rawn, if you'd only sell us two or three shares of International, we'd pay you twenty times what it's worth

—but it's very much cheaper now—by reason of Van's competing company!

“That's about all, I think!”

The others nodded silently. The game was not new to them, and even in its most complicated features might have been called simple, with resources such as theirs. If these resources had made Rawn, they could unmake him. It was all in the day's work for them.

“So I'll tell you what we'll do,” concluded the old financier after a time. “We'll just let you and Van look around here a little bit and see what more you can learn. You're one of the real directors of International Power to-day, Van. Mr. Rawn is on the minority and the toboggan list, or is going to be there. We'll take the first steps when we see the boys down East. The country's getting right now for a little speculation—things have been dead long enough. There'll be a market. When the market starts, I think you know which way it will go for a certain person I needn't name.”

IX

They rose, stood about loungingly for a time, and at length slowly separated, the older man and the ex-director with the pointed beard falling back of the others for just an instant.

“What's the truth about the row, Van?” demanded the old man, laying a large, pudgy hand on the other's shoulder.

“I don't know, honestly, what it is. I can tell you this much—your factory is closed. Your superintendent, Halsey, has quit his work and left his old residence. Didn't Rawn tell you *that*?”

"No! What's up now—some trouble with a woman? Wasn't he married to Rawn's daughter?"

"Yes, and she went to live with Papa. Papa had the coin."

"And the superintendent is going the chorus girl route here or in New York?"

"No, sir, not in the least,—nothing of the sort. You can't guess where he's gone."

The other shook his head.

"Well, I'll tell you then, since you are one of the directors of the International and I'm not! He's gone and taken his other pair of pants and his celluloid collar, and moved over to the North Shore! He's living in the same house with Papa J. Rawn right now;—that is to say, he has been for two or three weeks."

"Well, what do you know about *that*, too!" commented his friend.

"I don't know much about it. As I told you, there's something in here I don't understand. I can't for the life of me figure out that chap Halsey's motives or his moves. But I don't care about him. It's Rawn I'm after—and I'm going to get him!"

CHAPTER VII

THEY WHO SOW THE WIND

I

THE information given by the ex-director in regard to the whereabouts of Charles Halsey was substantially, if not circumstantially, correct. He had, indeed, done the most unlikely thing. He had taken up his abode, for the time at least, at the very place to which he might have seemed least apt to return; that is to say, the home of his father-in-law, John Rawn.

Many things moved Halsey to this action. In the first place, having ended his labors, he found no reason for any pretense of continuing them. Again, although he fully intended to bring divorce proceedings, and fully intended to leave the city, he was unwilling to depart without seeing once more his wife and their child, because news came to him of the little cripple's serious and continued illness. In point of fact, Grace Halsey, unhappy, morose, and now jealously suspicious, had brooded over her unfortunate situation in life until she also really was ill. Halsey grieved over this, in spite of all. As to the little hunchback, Laura, she had known only illness all her life; and Halsey, father after all, felt some foreboding which made him unready to leave for yet a time.

Halsey, in spite of his own bitterness of soul, realized that Rawn himself was well-nigh crazed by the business situation, and his conscience misgave him when he reflected upon the sudden consequences of his own acts. His sense of business honor and of personal justice told him he owed even so unreasonable a man as Rawn some sort of definite accounting for his own stewardship, unwelcome as another meeting between them must be to both.

Lastly, it may be added, Virginia Rawn had sent for him.

When he received her message he spent a night resolving that he would not go, that he would never again see either her or Grace; never again would set foot on ground belonging to John Rawn, come what could, let be lost what any of them all might lose. In the morning he changed his resolution. By evening of the next day he was at Graystone Hall.

To his surprise, he found it not immediately necessary to patch a peace with the master of Graystone Hall, for Rawn was absent. The great mansion seemed strangely and suddenly changed. An air of anxiety hung over all, the place was oddly silent. The servants went slipshod about their duties, and their mistress did not chide them. Swift disintegration of the domestic machine seemed to threaten; mysterious danger seemed to menace the very structure itself; long of so bold and indomitable front. Halsey still hesitated—and still remained.

II

Rawn customarily divided his time between the operating headquarters in the western city and the

general offices in the eastern capital, but now he had found it needful immediately to transfer all his activities to the latter scene. He did not know of his wife's invitation to Halsey, for he had started from his office, without even advising her of his intention, and even without conversation with her by telephone. He telegraphed from the train, stating that he had been called East on urgent matters. After that, no word at all came from him. It was not known when he would return. Halsey could only wait. In truth, he was little better than a man gone mad himself, and Rawn was worse than such.

Gradually, day by day, hour by hour, the terrible strain of this suddenly developed situation began to show its effects upon Rawn. He slept but little after his arrival in the East, showed himself more and more untidy in personal habits; and lastly, began to seek the false strength of intoxicating drink. His demeanor in his relations with his urbane associates daily lost its usual arrogance. John Rawn, late dictator, became explanatory, conciliatory—a change of mind which had visible physical tokens. His eye became weaker and more watery, his shoulders more drooped, his voice more quavering, his address less abrupt and domineering.

John Rawn was a broken man, and began to show it. Wherefore his late friends exulted. The wolves, ranged in circle, lick their chops when the wounded bull totters upon his uncertain legs. Certain large financial figures in the eastern city licked their chops, and smiled grimly, wolfishly, in contemplation of John Rawn as he tottered.

III

Yet Rawn himself could get no direct proof of the identity of those now secretly assailing him. At the directors' meetings of the International he was received politely and respectfully—with too much politeness and respect, as he felt, although himself unlike the man once wont to rule there with an iron hand. He did not dare tell them of Halsey's defection, could not doubt that they already knew of it; but he met no queries regarding that or anything else in the conduct of the western factory's business. No one seemed to know that the most important of all their factories was closed, after a tedious term spent in incompletion. His associates all were as polite as himself, indeed, more so; as ready as himself to discuss gravely and earnestly any detail of the business which now, as all politely agreed, seemed "somewhat involved," or "somewhat delayed." No one offered any criticism of the executive.

But, what was far more deadly to him, the market seemed most onerously and cruelly oppressive upon the outside investments of John Rawn. International Power was not hammered, for the reason that there was little of it out to hammer. The Rawn stock in International, of course, did not come upon the market. Rawn intended to hold on to that grimly, fighting for it to the last gasp, trusting to chance to mend matters for him at the eleventh hour. But ruin in the general market faced him; and he knew that, with credit gone, the courts would take for his former creditors whatever property he could be shown to have. He saw the

shadowy circle of the wolves of high finance. Almost he felt their fangs snapping at his hamstrings.

IV

In these savage hours the mind of John Rawn cast about for rescue, for hope. No rescue, no hope, appeared except one last desperate alternative, purchasable not now with cash or power or influence—since these were gone—but with what other and dearer things remain to a man—things some men, not rotted with the love of self, keep through any or all disaster, prize, even above life and all a life's business success. Halsey! Ah! Halsey was the savior of Rawn—Halsey, the man who had humiliated him in his own home. How could Halsey be secured? There might be brought to bear upon him one influence—that of a beautiful and fascinating woman! What matter if the one woman was his wife, Virginia Rawn? He had already hinted to her of her duty. He wondered now continually whether she had really and fully understood. He wondered what she was doing with Halsey.

As to Halsey, who knew little or nothing of all these turbulent emotions, all these crowding incidents, he found his situation in the great house of John Rawn one wholly to his dislike. He saw little of his wife Grace after the first conventional greeting on his arrival, and as to the young mistress of Graystone Hall, she seemed so regularly to have matters demanding her own presence elsewhere, was so busy with other matters, as to have small time for him. The disturbed condition of the stock market was creating a furor

in the business world, reflected, of course, in the daily markets of the western city; but Halsey had never had many investments, had watched the markets little; and now, isolated at Graystone Hall almost as much as though upon a desert island, and too much disturbed and distracted in his own mind to find any definite interest in business matters, was hardly conscious of the storm that raged. He simply waited on, unhappily. It seemed to him there was no place for him in all the world. Why did Virginia remain aloof?

Rawn, absent in New York, imagined his wife engaged continuously in the struggle of persuading Charles Halsey to see the light of reason, although he did not know Halsey was living under the same roof with her. As a matter of fact, Halsey and she met but rarely. Virginia breakfasted for the most part in her own rooms, and found, or pretended to find, something to occupy her for the most part of the day. Not once did she ask his attendance, not once did she speak with him, when by chance she saw him, upon any but casual or conventional matters. She seemed always to evade him; and because she did this, he, rebelling, sought her out all the more, even while continually resolving to take his departure, and never again to see this place, or her, again. He wondered at her reticence, her avoidance of him. He wondered why she was so pale. He loitered about, unhappily, in this or that common meeting ground of the great mansion house, waiting to hear the rustle of a gown upon the stair, the sound of a light foot on a floor, the touch of a white hand, the sound of a voice—all things belonging, not to his wife, but to his young stepmother by law.

Yes. Without his wish, in spite of her wish, these had become things desired, the only things desirable any more in his distracted life. He lived under the same roof with two women, saw either rarely, and rarely thought of but one—the wrong one. To atone, Halsey lavished all his time and care on his little hunchback daughter, and had her with him as much as the nurse and doctor would allow. The child, undersized, pale, deformed, silent and wistful, and pathetic always, now was listless and weak, obviously very seriously ill. It wrung her father's heart to see her. But Charles Halsey wanted it wrung. He wanted to do bitterest penance for what he now knew was his secret sin. So the ways of inordinate power, the consequences, for this one or that one, which follow on inordinate greed, worked themselves on out toward their sure and logical ending, the mill of fate grinding those primarily, secondarily, even incidentally guilty.

At this time, had Virginia Rawn asked of him to recant, to relent, to change, there is likelihood he would have done so. John Rawn, cuckold, was right in his despicable reasoning. There are many prices which purchase principles. The weakness which had prompted Halsey to remain at Graystone Hall on such a tenure—which held him there now, waiting for a voice, listening for a footfall—was the ancient weakness of youth before youth, of strength before beauty, of the empty heart before one offering love, of the mind finding perfect echo in another mind.

With all his starved heart, all his repressed soul, all his mutinous body, Charles Halsey loved Virginia Rawn.

CHAPTER VIII

THEY WHO WATER WITH TEARS

I

AS at last the news of John Rawn's collapse broke full and fair—disastrous enough to please even his late warmest friends. The stock markets, East and West, became scenes of riot. The truth, of course, had leaked out regarding Rawn's fight in the last ditch. The newspapers swarmed upon Graystone Hall, besieging any who could be found. Halsey refused to talk, and moreover, Rawn could not be found. This threw them upon their own resources, and what they did not know they imagined. Even thus, the wildest of them all could not imagine half; the shrewdest of the journalists could not get their hands on the "inside story" here. No one in or around or back of the stock exchanges could be found possessed of secret information which he was willing to impart. Throughout wild hours of hurrying, telegraphing, investigating, the papers kept up their frenzied search for the truth, and found it not, and knew they had not found it.

Halsey, one morning after a sleepless night, more than a week after Rawn's departure to New York, secured copies of each of the morning papers. He stood uncertain, in the great central room of Graystone Hall,

with these black and frowning messengers of fate in his hands, scarce daring to look at them. He felt some sense of definite disaster at hand. He glanced at last at one, and started as though struck. Calling a servant, he sent word to Mrs. Rawn inquiring if he might meet her at once.

She joined him presently, smiling faintly, giving him her hand, then leading him to a breakfast table on the long gallery facing the lake front, a favorite spot with her. She gave the butler orders to serve them breakfast here at once; for she now learned Halsey had neither slept nor eaten. Halsey did not learn that the same also was true of her.

II

They seated themselves and for the time said nothing, each gazing out over the lake. The morning was calm and beautiful. The blue lake, just dotted with little whitecap rolling waves, seemed in amiable mood, and purred gently along the sea-wall, below the green and curving terrace which ran down from the gallery front. A bird chirped here and there.

Little enough the peaceful scene reflected the feelings of these, its only human figures. Virginia Rawn was pale. Dark rings showed below her eyes. Her mouth drooped just a trifle, plaintively, in a way not usual with her. She was pale, paler than her usual clean and clear ivory. Yet she was coolly beautiful in her morning gown of light figured lawn, with its wide, flowing sleeves, showing her round white arms. Halsey, frowningly serious, felt the charm of her rise about him, overwhelm him. He knew that the hour

had come for him in more ways than one; that hers, for ever, was the one face and figure and voice and presence for him, hopeless and unhappy, and doomed for ever so to remain. She was not his wife. She was the wife of another man—of his enemy; the man in all the world least like himself; the man who, by virtue of that unlikeness, had won this woman for his own. What hope for him, Charles Halsey, for whom was no place in the world?

III

Without much comment he placed before her the morning papers, with their glaring head-lines.

"Well," said he, "it is the end."

"Yes?" said she, smiling; "I suppose now we can learn all about our earlier life and career?"

"Quite so. Here is the entire history of Mr. Rawn's career—what he did when he was a young man, where he came from, how he rose to power, how he failed and fell—it's all here. Here's the story of the International Power Company—they claim it was intended as a merger of all the traction companies of the eight leading cities of the country! Bond issue one to eight billion dollars, capitalization one to two hundred billion in stocks—you can take your choice in crazed figures. Here are biographical histories of all the known and unknown stock-holders. Here, Mrs. Rawn, is a picture of yourself, as well as one of Mr. Rawn and one more of the house here—a new view, I think. The photographer must have made a flashlight of the grounds."

She smiled as he tried to jest, following his pointing finger along the blurred, brutal head-lines, shrieking

their discordant, impossible and inconsistent tales. The first paper, the *Forum*, declared the ruin of John Rawn's fortune to be now beyond all hope of repair. Rawn himself—really at that time often in a helpless stupor in a New York hotel room—was reported to have fled the country. Halsey, his son-in-law, and Halsey's wife, who really had only denied themselves to visitors and reporters—were declared to be in hiding in some secret apartments of the great castle on the North Shore, a place actually but little known to any member of the select North Side society in which Rawn had been, more or less on sufferance, received. Rawn's wife was also located here, in a condition verging on insanity; according to the imagination of the writers, which, after all, was fatefully near to the truth.

Virginia Rawn smiled, and turned the pages. The next journal had little else but detailed discussion of the Rawn collapse. It also asserted the scheme of the International Power Company was the most bold and rapacious fraud of the day. With journalistic vaticination it insouciantly declared that the intention of the company was to establish central distributing points for power stolen from the public's great water powers, and the retail of what the journal in the argot of the day called canned power, in cheap and portable small motors applicable to countless semi-mechanical uses, all with an end of abolishing the need for horse power and for man power alike. The result, it pointed out, would be the throwing out of work of countless thousands of laboring men by the use of electricity stolen from the people themselves. The gigantic combination already was covering the main water powers.

The people's present openly had been disregarded, the people's future openly and patently had been put in the gravest of peril. The entire system of government had been laid by the heels. The name of the republic had been made a mockery. Above all, it was asserted, the most intimate intent of the International Power Company had been the throttling of the labor unions—against which John Rawn was known to be personally bitterly opposed—the very essence and soul of the conspiracy having been this device whose aim was to wipe out the need of unskilled labor, and to make useless and unpaid the power of human brawn.

IV

Following these assertions—which after all were not in the least bad journalism, however good or bad had been the design of International Power—the same journal exultantly declared that labor need not yet despair, for that the gigantic conspiracy now had fallen in ruins; its leader had abdicated and fled, and his ill-gotten gains had been dissipated in his last desperate attempt to save his holdings in other stocks. In his ultimate fight he had surrendered the control of the International, so long and desperately held in his ownership, and now was ousted from the presidency, other managers being left in charge of the wreck of a desperate marauder's attempt to throttle a republic and to rule a country. And so forth, to many extra pages, all deliciously explicit, and wondrous welcome alike to those who purchase and those who purvey the news.

The chronicle of all this was accompanied in this journal not only with pictures of Graystone Hall, but

of the abandoned factory of the International Power Company; also with portraits of Rawn and his wife and of Charles Halsey, late superintendent of the company; as well as those of Jim Sullivan, the foreman, Ann Sullivan, his wife, and other labor leaders sometimes concerned about the mysterious factory which had housed the desperate secret of International Power. As it chanced, the portraits of Ann Sullivan and Virginia Rawn had been exchanged, so that the beautiful Mrs. Rawn appeared as a hard-featured Irish woman of more than middle age; whereas Mrs. Sullivan, wife of the well-known labor leader, presented a somewhat distinguished figure in her eminently handsome gown and obviously valuable jewels.

V

Virginia Rawn looked calmly, smilingly, over these and many other varying details of these closing scenes in her career. "Very well," said she, pointing to the likeness accredited to her name, "this is the last time my portrait will appear in print, I suppose. What difference does it make? The older and uglier I am, the better the story! Perhaps for once Mrs. Sullivan, when she sees her picture—young, rich, with plenty of jewels—will think her dreams have come true! Maybe she's dreamed—I know I did; and I know what I am. The names and pictures are right, just as they are. She wins, not I.

"But yes, I suppose this is the end of it all, as you say," she added wearily, almost indifferently. "Of course, we've known it was coming. I suppose there was nothing else *could* come of it all."

Halsey at first could make no answer except to drop his face in his hands. A half groan escaped him, in spite of his attempt to rival her courage or her indifference, whichever it might be.

"*I've* done this," he said at last; "*I've* brought all this on you. It's all my fault, and it's too late now for me to help it. We couldn't straighten out things in the business now, even if I went back to work. It's too late. I've ruined you, Mrs. Rawn."

"Yes, that's plain," she answered quietly. "But isn't this just what you wanted? Haven't you always resented the success of others, deprecated the wish of some men to get money at any cost? Aren't you a Socialist at heart? Didn't you want this—just this?"

"Want it? No! How could I want anything which meant harm for *you*? If only you had come to me and asked me to go back—asked me to get into line!"

"You'd have done it, wouldn't you, Charley—for me?" She smiled at him, her small, white teeth showing. But back of her smile he felt the pulse of a mind.

"I don't know—how could I have helped it?"

"Then you'd have forgotten all your loyalty to those people over there? You'd have forgotten all about the rights of man of which you told me, and your devotion to the principles of this republic of which you talked—is that true? You'd have forgotten all, everything, for *me*?"

VI

"Yes, I would!" He looked her fair in the eye, truthfully. "I know that, now—I didn't know it then, but I do now. Yes, I would. Just as I told him—Mr. Rawn."

"You told him, what?"

"Why, that we all have our price. I suppose I had mine."

"So you'd have done that if I had asked you?"

"Then in God's name why did you not ask me? At least, I'd have saved you *this!*" He smote on the paper with his clenched fist. "Why didn't you ask me to save you this humiliation?"

"I did not, because I knew all along what you'd do if I did ask you."

Silence fell between them now. "Why didn't you?" he once more demanded, half-whispering. "You'd already won. You'd have won me—my principles—my honor."

"Because I did not *want to win!*" she answered sharply.

"Win what?"

"I was sent to bring you into camp, to 'get' you, Charley. I did not want to—I did not! I was afraid I *would!*"

"I don't think I quite understand."

His face was white, his voice low and clear, his eye full on hers.

"I was sent out for you, Charley—by my own husband! You know it, we both knew it. I suppose he's been waiting somewhere for me to get word to him that I had done what I was told to do—that I had got you in hand, willing to renounce everything that you held good in your own life. Well, it's too late, now! I'm glad!"

"He sent you out after me!—With what restrictions—?"

"None. He didn't care how. He told me he didn't.

That's why I've been keeping away from you. I was afraid I'd win—I was afraid I'd save all this."

She nodded her head, including the splendors of the mansion house, its view of the lake, all the gracious, delicate ministries of Wealth.

VII

"Good God!" Halsey broke out. "The man who would do that is not worth a woman's second thought."

"Of course not. And the woman who would do that—?"

"Don't ask me about that; I can't think. All I know is that if you had asked me to do anything in the world, I think I'd have said yes."

"For me?"

"Yes, for you. It's the truth. It's all out, at last! There's the whole story now of John Rawn—all of it, in black and white! Here's all *my* story—to you. You must have known—"

"Yes," she nodded; "of course. That was why, I said, that I've evaded you so long. It was very hard to do, Charley; a hundred times I've been on the point of sending for you. But I didn't."

"I'm glad, too," he said simply, seeing it was to be soul facing soul, between them now. "I've missed you. I've never passed such days in my life as I have here. There's Grace hating me, you ought to hate me—I ought to hate you! Oh, Rawn, man! Where would you have stopped, to get money, to get power? Oh, excellent!—to set your wife as a trap for another man! But it worked! It could have been done!" He looked her frankly in the face as he finished. "I love

you, Virginia," he said simply. "I suppose I have all along. It's cheap, after all—at this price. But for all this, I never could have told you.

"But one thing I will say,"—the unhappy young man added, after a long time; "it's the one thing I can claim for an excuse. *My* price was love for you, and *good* love. It was the whole love of man for woman—I never knew before what that meant! It wasn't for money, but for you. That great, mysterious second current—what you yourself said was the one vast power of all the universe—that belonged to *everybody*—love—love—I thought *that* belonged to me, too. I can't see even now where that is wrong. I can't think, I don't know. If it is wrong, then I've been wrong. We're down in the mire together! I dragged you there. And once I dreamed of doing something to lift people up—that was why I mutinied and tore up the motors. And I had my own selfish price. . . . I can never lift up my head again. But I love you!"

VIII

She looked at him, her lips parted, her bosom agitated now, her eyes large, her color slowly increasing. "You must not!—Stop, we must think! Charley—"

"But why didn't you?" he demanded fiercely. "Why didn't you finish your work as you promised?"

"I never promised. I didn't finish it—because I knew I *could*. I told you—it was—Charley—yes—it was—love!"

"For me?"

He half started up now, but she raised a hand to restrain him.

"The servants!" she whispered. Indeed, even as she spoke she saw the livery of the butler disappearing at the tall glass doors letting out to the gallery. She did not know that the butler had seen much and heard somewhat; that being a butler he was wise.

"But it's got to be—we've got to go through now!" he went on savagely. "Why did you start this, then? Why did you let me know?"

"It was he who started it in me—ambition! No, I always had it. From the day I was born I wanted to climb, to win, to be rich, to have things in my hands. All girls want that, I suppose, till they know how little it is. So I married him—I tried to, and I did. I knew he had money. . . . But then there was more I wanted, after all. I only wanted that something *else*, too, that any woman wants—what she's got to have, once in her life, rich or poor, because she's a woman—some one who truly loves her for herself as she is, because she is what she is—because she's a woman!

"Oh, I looked all around me here, a long time after I came here, for what I'd missed. I've never been happy here. I didn't have it. I wanted it. At last I saw it. I wanted it. Its price is ruin—for two, you and me. I'm like you. If it's wrong, I don't know where the wrong began! I didn't mind, so far as I was concerned. Let a woman love you, and she'll do anything, no matter how it hurts—herself. But not *you*—not the man she loves and wants to respect, Charley."

"But—me? I am not good enough for you!"

"Oh, boy! How sweet that sounds to me! Say it over again to me! You make me think I might some day be worth a man's love. It's got away from us

now. It's all too late. Everything's too late. When he—Mr. Rawn—comes back, we've got to tell him. I've done what I was set to do—but not the way he thought, not the way any of us thought!"

IX

"Yes, he must know!" Halsey nodded. He held her hand now in his own. They swept on, as upon some vast wave, helpless, clinging to each other, he doing what he could to save her.

"I don't know how to tell him," she wailed. "There was something Pagan in me and I didn't know it. I thought I was in hand, but I wasn't! I started low, and I wanted to climb up—and up—and up! Oh, Charley, look!" She leaned toward him across the table, pleading. "I was just ambitious, just like any American girl—like every woman in the world, I suppose. If I sold out, I didn't know it. I didn't *want* you to care for me. But you did, you do! I kept away from you, so that you wouldn't, so that we *couldn't*—so that I'd always feel that *you*, at least—"

"Where can it end?" he asked quietly.

"I don't care where it ends, that's the worst of it; I don't care! One thing only is to my credit. I've kept my bargain—with him. I've paid the price I agreed to give. There is no scandal about me—yet. And there might have been!"

"Yes."

"But some way, when he sent me out for you, talked to me as he did, treated me like a piece of merchandise as he did—for once I wavered. For once, Charley, it seemed to me that I was released from all obliga-

tions to him, that I was where I ought to have a chance for my own hand, to see life as life could be for itself, to have the love that's life for a woman. I wanted to be wooed and won by some one who loved me, just as any woman wants to be, Charley, some time! And I wasn't—I wasn't. . . . It was horrible. . . . It was horrible. . . . I wanted to give love for love. I wanted what I couldn't get, and saw it was too late to get it fair. And when I saw that you—that even you'd sell out for *me*—why, where was the good, clean thing left in all the world? I couldn't tell. I didn't know what to do. I don't know now. But you put these papers before me now, and you expect me to shed tears over them. I can't. I don't care. The worst was over for me before now. It came when I knew you'd love me if I'd raise a finger to you. Why didn't you make me love you first—long ago? *Then* all would have come right. Back there—at first—"

"They'll say that when your husband lost his fortune he lost his wife. Yes—" he nodded. "They'll say that and believe it! That isn't true!"

"No, that isn't true. I was done with him the moment he set this errand for me. No woman can love a man who will do that. But I was done with him—from the first I *never* loved him, I never did—I only married him! I sold out—what I had to sell, myself, my fitness for a place like this. That was what I called success! I wanted to be some one in the world! Look at me now—"

X

They sat, two figures in an inexorable drama that swept relentlessly forward; tasting of a part of am-

bition's ripened fruit; yet hungering with the vast, pitiful, merciless human hunger for that other fruit that hung in a garden once not lost.

"If it costs my soul, I'll stand by you," he said at last; and he reached out a hand to her suddenly.

"No, no!" she cried. "Wait! Wait! I want to think!"

A discreet cough sounded. The butler approached bearing coffee. He wore a half sneer on his face now, the sneer of the unpaid mercenary. He doubted, and had cause to doubt, whether the last month's salary would be forthcoming; for butlers read morning papers. "Ah, er, Mrs. Rawn—" he began.

"What do you want? How dare you speak to me!" she rejoined. "I do not care to be disturbed! You may go!"

He did go; and this was on an errand of his own, an errand which ended in Grace Halsey's chambers. For butlers sometimes take ingenious revenge.

XI

Halsey and Virginia Rawn sat on for a time at the table, the almost untasted breakfast before them. The sun grew warmer. After a time she rose, and they passed from the gallery toward the interior of the house. The tray upon the hall table held a scanty morning load for it—one letter and a telegram; the former addressed to Mrs. Charles Halsey, the latter to herself.

"Shall I?" she asked, and tore the envelope across.

"It must be from him," he said. She tossed it to him.

"Home to-night. JOHN RAWN."

CHAPTER IX

WHAT CHEER OF THE HARVEST?

I

THE blood of youth is hot. He followed her, in spite of all, forgetting all. They had advanced across the hall toward the gold room, or library.

"Oh, Charley, Charley! Don't begin, wait a little," she wailed. "At least till to-night, till afternoon. I don't know what to say yet. I don't know what to do! Let us see him first, and tell him."

"Look about you," he commented grimly. "You're going to lose all this—all these splendid, beautiful things."

"I don't mind losing them. I want to be poor. Oh, my God! Just to be loved, and clean! Charley, can we?"

"But why choose me? There are so many others!"

"All like Mr. Rawn himself—men crazed of money, power, selfishness. I wanted something different. Do you think it could have been my father's old ideas coming out in me, so late? He came of a family of revolutionists—independents; 'Progressives,' they call them now. Something of his beliefs—I don't know what it was—"

"But you'll have to leave him in any case. Divorce

is simple enough. You know what I would have done, and done, also, in any case. Grace and I—”

“Yes, I know all about everything. Everything’s past,” she said despairingly. “We’re dead. It’s all over!”

“I ought to go?” he asked vaguely.

“Yes, pretty soon. But I suppose you’ll have to see Grace, and—to-night I’ll have to see—”

He bowed his head. “Yes, we’ve got to pay that part first. The best we can do and all we can give ought to be enough for him.”

II

She turned, left him, passing through the great doors to the central rooms within. Following her still, he found her at the stair and joined her. There approached them now, with hasty tread and face somewhat excited, the medical man who had been for so many days now in attendance upon Grace Rawn and her child. He had come on his morning visit unnoticed by them.

“Ah,” he began, “I’m glad to find you, Mrs. Rawn—and you, Mr. Halsey—I’ve been looking for you—Come! Come quickly!” His face showed plainly his agitation.

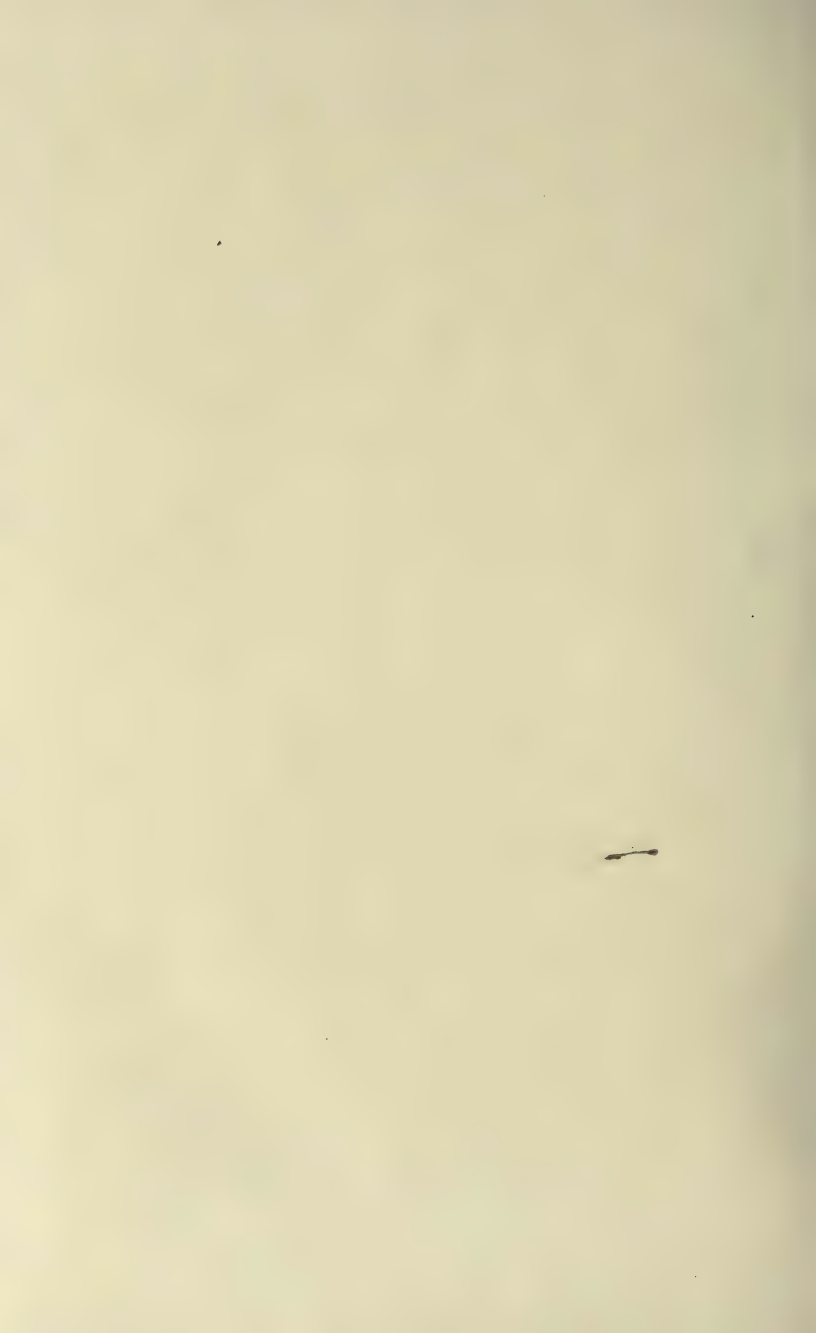
“Is there anything wrong?” demanded Halsey sharply. “What’s the trouble?”

“It is my duty to tell you the truth,” began the doctor. “Your wife is a very sick woman, indeed.”

“I know that, yes.”

“But not the worst until this morning, until just *now*. Something—”





"I've been here in the house waiting—why did you not call me?" began Halsey clumsily.

"You must not *wait!*" the doctor interrupted him, taking him by the arm and hastening toward the stairway.

They followed him up the stair, down the upper hall, to the rooms which had been set apart of late days for Grace and her child, quarters all too unfamiliar to Halsey himself.

They found Grace Halsey, faint and gasping, half sitting in her bed, clasping the child in her arms, herself too weak now longer to hold it up. Halsey, stricken with sudden horror, ran to take the child in his own arms.

The truth was obvious. Even as he lifted the poor crippled form in his arms, the head fell back, helpless. The eyes glazed, turned back uncovered. Halsey cried out aloud. He turned about, dazed; horror and helplessness were on his face. It was to Virginia Rawn he turned, as to the other part of himself.

It was Virginia Rawn who took from him the feeble, misshapen body, gathering it into her own arms. She gazed intently, frowning, grieving a woman's grief over suffering, bending over its face; her own face held back over it when she saw the truth. Then she passed him and placed the body of the child upon its cot near-by, covering it gently.

III

"Grace, Grace!" sobbed Halsey. He fell upon his knees at his wife's bedside. She did not see him, did not recognize him, although she turned a questioning

face toward him. "Me, too!" he cried. "I want to go! I want to die and end it! Everything's wrong . . ."

"Come," said the doctor presently; "it's too late now. I'll call for you after a time." He took Halsey by the arm and led him from the room. Returning, he signed for Virginia Rawn also to leave the sick chamber. Left alone, the medical man turned to the professional nurse in attendance. "Keep it quiet," he said. "It would hurt my practice—do you hear?"

He kicked beneath the bed a small broken vial, and wiped away the stain from the lips of the dying woman.

The doctor, of course, had his guess, the public its guess, the daily papers theirs. The truth was, Grace Halsey, by butler route, had learned of the *tête-à-tête* of her husband and her stepmother a half hour before this time.

CHAPTER X

THOSE WHO REAP THE WHIRLWIND

I

GRACE HALSEY, dead, her crippled child dead beside her, never knew the contents of the letter which had been received for her that morning. It still laid on the hall table unnoticed. There was almost none to pay attention to the many duties of the household. The last servants had begun to pass, scenting disaster even as had others. The magic which had builded this mansion house now lacked strength to hold its tenantry. There remained now only one man—the butler, lingering for his pay. Only two persons might still be said to be actuated by any sense of loyalty or duty to Graystone Hall and its owner—Halsey and Virginia Rawn.

Of duty—to what and to whom? They dared not ask, dared not think. They waited, they knew not for what. The master of this mansion house was forth upon his business. Somewhere, he was hastening toward his home. When he might be expected they did not know. Nor did the master know what news awaited him upon his coming.

II

The evening dailies came out upon the streets, reeling and reeking with the last accumulating sensations of the Rawn disasters. The business world continued to rub its eyes, the social world continued to exult. Many and many a woman smiled that evening as she contemplated proofs of the downfall of one whom once she had envied. The Rawns, it now seemed, had all along been known, by everybody who was anybody, to have been nobody at all. They who had sown the wind, had the whirlwind for their reaping. This was the general day of harvest for Graystone Hall.

But the day passed on. Shadows lengthened beyond the tall towers and softened as they fell toward the east. The soft airs of evening, turning, came in across the open gallery front. Night came, night unbroken by more than a few lights in all the myriad windows of this stately monument which John Rawn had builded as proof of his personal success. Vehicles, passing slowly, held occupants staring in curiosity at this vast, vacant pile. Human sympathy lacked, human aid there was not.

III

Thus it chanced easily that there passed up the long driveway of Graystone Hall, almost unnoticed, a vehicle carrying one who seemed a stranger there; an elderly, rather tall woman of gray hair and unfashionable garb, who made such insistence with the servant at the door that at length she won her way through.

Her errand seemed not one of curiosity, nor did she

lack in decision. She left upon the table an old-fashioned reticule, and following the advice given her, in reply to her question, passed up the stair and down the upper hall, to the room where lay Grace Halsey and her child. There, unknown by any of the household and accepted by those whose professional duties took them thither, she remained for many hours. Halsey and Virginia Rawn did not know of her coming.

It was a cold home-coming, also, which awaited John Rawn. But he came at last, to meet that which was for him to encounter. It was night. The lights were few and dim. None greeted him at his own gate, none even at his own door, which was left unguarded. At length he found the solitary footman-butler, asleep in a chair, the worse for wine.

"Where is she?" he demanded. "Where is Mrs. Rawn?"

He turned before he could be coherently answered, and passed down the hall toward the library, through whose closed doors he saw a faint light gleaming.

IV

Something impelled John Rawn to hesitate. He stood, himself the very picture of despair, his face drawn, haggard, unshaven, his hair disordered, his hands twitching. He must find his wife, he said to himself; he must ask her what success she had had with their last hope. Yes, yes, it must be true! With Halsey's aid he would yet win! If she had won—Halsey would yet be on his side—Halsey would tell him—Halsey would go back to the factory—

But John Rawn hesitated at this door. He felt,

rather than knew, believed rather than was advised, that his wife was beyond that door. He waited, apprehensive, but kept up with himself the pitiful pretense of self-deception. Ah, power, control, command!—those were the great things of the world, he reasoned. True, he knew his daughter lay dead in her room on the floor above—the paper he held in his hand told him that; for at last the doctor had prepared his statement regarding Mrs. Halsey's death by "heart failure"—the rich and all akin to them always die respectably, in a house so large as Graystone Hall. But it was too late to save her, Rawn reasoned. Let the dead bury the dead. The larger things must outweigh the small. He first must know what his wife had done with Halsey.

To the tense, strained nerves of John Rawn the truth was now as apparent as it had been to the sensibilities of all these others, late friends, servants, sycophants. Ruin was here, in his citadel, his castle of pride. Only one thing could save him. . . . He hesitated at the door, held back from that which he knew he was about to face. . . . But no, he reasoned, she was there alone, he *must* see her!

He flung open the folding doors and stood holding them apart.

v

Yes, she was there! John Rawn's face drew into a ghastly smile. Yes, she had won! She, the wonderful woman, had triumphed as he had planned for her to triumph. She had won! . . .

They stood before him, those two, silent, face to face, embraced; their arms about each other even as

he flung wide the door. They turned to him now, stupefied, so weary, so overstrained, that their arms still hung, embraced. The face of each was white, desolate, unhappy; more hopeless and desperate than terrified, but horrible. They were lovers. They loved, but what could love do for them, so late? They had paid—but what right had they to love, so late?

John Rawn, the man who had wrought all this, stood and gazed, ghastly, smiling distortedly, at his wife's face. Why, then, should she be unhappy? What was to be lost save that which he, John Rawn, was losing—or had been about to lose?

But he was startled, stupefied, himself, for one moment. He turned back, hesitating; and so tiptoed away, leaving them, although the joint knowledge of all was obvious. They had not spoken a word, had not started apart, had only gazed at him like dead persons, white, silent, motionless—not lovers; no, not lovers.

For one-half instant, alone in the wide and darkened hall, Rawn straightened himself up, threw his chest out. Yes, she had won—she had done her task! She held Charles Halsey fast—there—in her embrace. He, John Rawn, multimillionaire, collector of rare objects, one of God's anointed rich, had the shrewdest wife the world had ever seen, the most beautiful, the most successful!

Had he not seen—was it not there before his eyes? She had his one enemy netted, in her power—there—had he not seen? She brought him, bound hand and foot, to him, John Rawn! Could a man doubt his eyes? They had hunted well in couple, he and his wife, and now she had pulled down their latest victim! . . .

What mattered the means?—there was but one great thing. And the great things must outweigh the small. He was a man of power. He had been born for success. He was—

VI

He stood, half in the shadow, hesitant. Then he heard other feet approaching him slowly. His wife, Virginia, came and took him by the arm and had him within the door; closed it back of him; and, leaving him, advanced to where Halsey stood. She took Halsey by the hand. . . . It seemed a singular thing to Rawn, this performance; in fact, almost improper, if the truth were known. . . . So it seemed to John Rawn's mind, a trifle clouded with distress and drink.

"Well," said she apathetically; and held her peace as he frowned and looked at her dumbly.

"Well!" he broke out at last; "I'm back again!—You're *here*, I see." This last to Halsey.

They two stood and regarded him without comment. Halsey kept his eye on Rawn's hand, expecting some sudden movement for a weapon. He was incredulous that any man could sustain Rawn's attitude toward him. War, and nothing but war, seemed inevitable between himself and Rawn, the man whom he had wronged, the man who had wronged him.

"I suppose—I see—" began Rawn clumsily, after a while. "Of course, you have probably been here all the time, Charley. I came back as soon as I could. I've been having all kinds of trouble in St. Louis and New York. Everything's all gone to pieces."

They did not answer him, and he shuffled.

"Have you anything to say?" he demanded of his

wife; "Has Mr. Halsey—Charley—agreed?—Have you persuaded him to—"

"You wish to know whether I have done what I was told to do—is that it?" she demanded of him coldly.

"Yes; have you?"

"I have. Here is Mr. Halsey. I have kept my word. You have seen. I told you I could bring him in, bound hand and foot. Kiss me, Charley," she cried. "Oh! kiss me!" And he did kiss her. Cold, white, hand in hand, dead, they then faced him again.

VII

"Is it true?" began Rawn. His eyes lighted up suddenly. "He has agreed?"

Halsey broke in now. "It is true, Mr. Rawn," said he. "I love her. I love your wife; I can't help it. I have told her so. You see."

"You love her!" John Rawn burst out into a great, croaking laugh. "You *love* her? I say, that's good! That's good news to tell me, isn't it? Why—I sent her—I used her, to *make* you love her! You see reason now at last, do you?—every man does at last—every man has his price. You'll go back to work to-morrow? There's a lot to do, but we can save it all yet. We can whip them, I tell you—we'll get everything back in our own hands before to-morrow night!"

"—But, Mr. Rawn! Listen! You do not know! Surely you do not understand—"

"Understand? What is there left to understand? Didn't I see you both just now? Didn't you—right now—haven't you *got* to come across now? Hasn't

she done what I told her to do; what she said she'd do? I told her to bring you back to us again, and she's done it, hasn't she?

"But come on, now," he resumed, as though reluctantly—"I suppose we've got to go up there—Grace—? Too bad. . . . But I wanted to see Jennie first."

"My God!" whispered Virginia Rawn, shuddering. "Oh, my God!"

VIII

"Rawn," said Halsey directly, abandoning even any pretense at courtesy; "the end of the world has come for you, for us all. My wife is dead—she's lucky! My child is dead, too, and that's lucky. It had no life to live, crippled as it was. She killed herself and the baby. I don't seem to care as I ought to care. And now your wife has told me that she loves me. It's true! She doesn't love *you*; she never has. She has not taken me a prisoner any more than I have her. We're both in this to-night. We're both to blame. But, at the bottom, *you* are to blame—for *all* of this."

"Of course! Of course!" smiled John Rawn sardonically. "What would you expect? I am sorry. But I'll never tell any one about it, you can depend on that!"

"You'll never tell!" went on Charles Halsey slowly. "You'll never *need* to tell. But here's what I want to tell *you*, once more. Whatever this is—and it's about bad enough—it's come because of *you*. You—you were the cause of this!"

"*You blame me*—why, what do you mean!" burst out John Rawn. "Where have *I* been to blame, I'd like to know! What do you mean, young man?"

"Every word I have told you, and more than I can tell you. You'll not think—you don't dare to face the truth; but there's the real truth. If you can't understand that, take what you can understand. Your wife isn't to blame—I'm to blame. Love is to blame. I love her. I've done this."

"You have done—what?"

"I've taken your wife away from you, can't you understand, you fool? She's going to marry me as soon—"

"*Jennie!*—what's this fellow talking about?" The veins on John Rawn's forehead stood high and full.

IX

"He is only telling you the truth," she said calmly, wearily. "I don't care one picayune whether or not you know it, whether or not the world knows it! I'm tired! I'm done with all this sort of thing! Yes, I'm going to marry him as soon as we can get away. As soon as it's decent, if anything's decent any more!"

"And you love him, you'll rob *me*, you'll leave *me*—you'll—why, are you all crazy? What are you talking about? When I've given you everything you've got—when you were so much to me! *Jennie!*"

"No, no!" she raised a hand. "Don't talk about that! It's all over now."

She tore at her throat, at her fingers, heaped up in his hands the gems she wore even then, the gems she had put upon her person to protect them from uncertain servants, gems which left her blazing like some waxen queen in her tomb—white, dead, enjeweled.

"Take them!" she cried. "I don't want them." She

went on, piling his hands full of glittering, flashing things. He stood gazing at her, stupefied. Then, slowly, the burden of years, the burden of business failure, and lastly this—the burden of the worst of man's discomfiture, the worst of a man's possible losses—began to weigh down upon him. He shortened visibly; shriveled; drooped.

X

They had no pity for him. Youth has no pity for age, love no pity for a mate's inefficiency; but after all some sort of contempt, at least, seemed due him.

"Rawn," said Halsey, "it's pretty hard. We're all of us paying a hard, heavy price for what we thought we had. But we can't evade it, any part of it. It was your fault that Grace left me. We were going to part. You sent your wife after me, as you call it. I suppose Grace found that out. You know what she did then. I said I blame you, and so I do. But I was going to get a divorce—"

"Divorce!—you divorce my daughter! John Rawn's daughter!"

"Did you not divorce her mother—you, yourself?"

"But I loved—my wife—I mean, this woman—Jennie, here!"

"So do *I* love her; more than you do or ever will know how to do! What you have done we'll do. Is it worse for us than it was for you? What's the difference?"

"But she's my *wife*! Why, *Jennie*!" He held out a hand to her.

"So was Laura Rawn your wife, my wife's mother," went on Halsey. "What's the difference?"

Virginia Rawn stepped between the two. "I'm as much to blame as any one of us all," she said quietly. "I sold out to you, didn't I, Mr. Rawn—down there in New York? I married you, didn't I? Very well, what you did, I have done. No more, and not without equal cause. I love him. I'm going to marry him. You and I are going to be divorced—if we were not I'd go to him anyhow. I hate you, I loathe you! My God! how I detest and loathe the sight of you! Go away—go away from us! You're not any part of a man!"

XI

"It's true!" gasped John Rawn to himself; "My God, it's true! She said that—I heard her—to me? What have I done to deserve this? . . . I ought to kill you," said he to Halsey slowly.

"Of course you ought," said Halsey. "If you were any portion of a man you would. But you've tried that, and you know where you ended."

"But Halsey—Charley!—you don't stop to think!" began Rawn pitifully. "You will go back—you *will* go back to the factory, in the morning? You will help me pull it together, won't you?"

"No, not one step back to the factory—never in the world! I'm done with that. I'm going away somewhere, and she's going with me, I don't know where. Let some one else work out what you thought we could do, and let some one else take the consequences—it's not for me. You've got what you earned—I suppose

I'll get what I've earned, too. I don't care about that any more."

Rawn could not answer the young man as he went on, slowly, dully, bitterly. "If I've been traitor to any of my own creed I reckon God'll punish me. Very well; I will take my punishment on my shoulders. I've no apologies to make in a place like this.

"Haven't you gone up—oughtn't we to go up now—up-stairs?" he added at last. He put down Virginia's arms from his shoulders; for once more she had come to him.

Rawn sighed. "I suppose I must go up there," he said vaguely.

He turned and walked away, heavy, stumbling.

CHAPTER XI

THE MEANS—AND THE END

I

HALSEY turned toward Virginia. They did not again embrace, but stood silent, almost apathetic now. Passion was far away from them, indeed had never fully seized them. The despair in human love was theirs; and love is half despair. She might have been some beautiful statue in white marble, so cold was she; and as for the man who faced her, his anger gone, he himself might have been the image of hopelessness. Central figures of an irreparable ruin, and seeing no avenue to happiness, for the time neither had word for the other.

At last Halsey raised his head, as some sound caught his ear. "What's that?" he said.

"I heard it," said she. "I think it's some one coming up the walk."

"Yes," he answered. "Listen! Why, it sounds like a crowd. What can that mean, now? Wait."

He left her and hastened out to the front door. He stood there, outlined fully by the hall lights behind him. Those who approached recognized him. He was greeted by a derisive shout, half-maudlin, scarce human in its quality. The solitary servant rushed up, excited. "What is it, Mr. Halsey?" he quavered. "Is

there going to be any trouble? Oh, I ought to have gone away with the others!"

"Get out of the way," replied Halsey calmly. "Get back behind the door. I'll go out and meet them."

"Here, you men!" he called out in sudden anger to the visitors. "What do you mean, coming here this way?" He was advancing toward them now, down the steps, into the curving walk, almost to the rim of the circle of light cast by the house lights.

"Don't you know any better than to come here at this time, you people? There's trouble in this house. There's death in here. Go on away, at once!"

II

The leader of the scattered group of ill-dressed men stepped forward. "No, we'll not go on away at once. We know who you are, all right, Mr. Halsey. Trouble! We're in trouble, too! We're lookin' for some more trouble, now."

"Well, I'm not to blame for that. What do you mean? Who are you, anyway?"

"You ought to know us! We've done up some of your damned sneaks. You cut your workmen down to the last copper in wages, and you didn't pay them that. Then when the pinch came, you shut the doors and slunk off, like the coward you was! Then they came over to us, at last! Your scabs is in the unions now."

"I haven't done anything of the kind!" retorted Halsey hotly. "I haven't been to the factory for days. When I left there, every cent was paid up. That wasn't any of my business anyhow—I was not cashier, but factory superintendent."

"It's a lie, you know it's a lie! We've come to show you up. We've come to take old man Rawn and you out of this place. We ought to ride him on a rail, and you with him! That's what we ought to do! We want that money." The leader advanced toward him menacingly.

"Why, men, I have not got your money—" expostulated Halsey. "If I had, this isn't the way to get it from me! I've always used you fellows square! You've got to act that way with me. I'm in trouble now, I tell you. My wife's dead, and my baby—to-day—in here. You are accusing the best friend you have got! Where's Jim Sullivan? Where's Tim Carney? Where's any of you men that used to work with me there in the factory? Any one of you ought to know better."

"They ain't here; but don't talk that to us! We know what you was doing with them machines. We know what you was up to. You wanted to take the bread out of our mouths! We seen it all in the papers, the whole thing, plain enough. No wonder you kept it all blind as you could—you wanted to put us off the earth."

"It's a lie!" cried Halsey sternly. "I broke them up. I threw up my job. I quit because I didn't *want* to see the bread taken out of your mouths. I stood between the company and just what you say. I wouldn't allow them to make it harder for you than it was. I never lost you a cent of wages—I stood for you all the time, I'm with you now. Why, men, I've been at your meetings, I'm *one* of you! Don't you know? Don't you remember? You've never asked a thing of me I haven't tried to do, that was in reason.

You know me! What difference about the union if I'm your sort?"

"Yes, ve *do* know you!" broke in a squat and pallid Jew, forcing himself through the thick to the front, and usurping the place of the wavering leader. "By Gott, ve do know you, Mister Halsey! You'fe lied to us, that's vat you'fe done! You'fe been to our meetings, yess, but you'fe betrayed us! I seen you there, yess!"

"That's not true!" answered Halsey hotly. "There isn't a word of truth in it! I've lost everything in the world I've got just *because* that isn't true. My wife's lying dead in that house back there—just because of that! My child's dead there too—just *because* of that—I've lost everything in the world I have got—just *because* that isn't true!"

III

The Jew shrieked aloud, half-insane. "To hell vith this country!" he said. "To hell vith the rich that rob us. If your vife's dead, it iss vat's right. My vife, she'll die too, she's starving. To hell vith Rawn and all like him!"

"Look here, my men, that's about enough of that!" rejoined Halsey. "You're drunk or crazy, and we're not going to stand for that here. It's no place for this kind of talk. I tell you, I've done all I could for you. I haven't sided with Rawn. If I had, I could be rich to-day."

"You *are* rich!" cried the Jew; "and ve are poor. You eat fat, you sleep soft. You *are* rich! But vat

do *ve* get? I'm hungry! My folks—they are starving! Ve haf no money. Ve get no money for vork ve did so long. It buys us nothing now. Meat is no more for us; breat, hardly. This *iss* no country for the people. This *iss* no land vere laws are just. This *iss* no republic of man. Jehovah, send Thy power! Smite and spare not, this so wrong a land!"

"You damned fanatic, shut up!" began Halsey savagely. "Get on out of here. You don't know your own friends! Who's to blame for your troubles? Haven't you got heads of your own? Haven't you got votes of your own? Can't you right your *own* wrongs, the first minute you get ready to do it, I'd like to know? I'm *for* you, do you understand; but you make it hard for any one to help you. You've had sluggers after our men all the time over there, and now you come and want us to pay you for that. You're over here to make trouble to-night, maybe slug me—perhaps that's what you are trying to do to me—and you want us to pay you for *that*. You talk about monopolies and trusts—what you're trying to do is to make the worst trust in the country—a monopoly in ignorance and savagery. Go on home and let me alone! I tell you, my wife is dead. I am going back to her!"

"He's lying to us!" cried out a voice in the crowd. "He's trying to get us sorry for him!"

"That's it!" screamed the Jew, who had edged to the front and who now stood crouched, menacing, not far from Halsey's erect and irate frame. "That's vhat he *iss*. He'ss only trying to fool us. Kill him! Ve've vaited long enough! Gif it to him!" He sprang to one side, crouching.

IV

Those back of them, at the gallery, in the rear of the entry, heard some sort of scuffle, a snarling of voices, curses. There were sounds of blows. Then came a flash, a shocking report; after that, a half-instant of silence, and the sound of scattering and departing footsteps.

There remained only one figure, lying outstretched on the gravel. To render succor to this, to offer aid, there was now only one human being left in all that place—she who now came hurrying forward.

Virginia Rawn half raised Halsey as he lay. "Charley!" she said quietly. "Can you talk?"

He gasped and nodded. "Through here!" He touched his chest. "I guess I'll not—be able—"

She called out, to any back of her, for aid. The frightened servant came, and between them they got him somehow into the house, dragging him to the gold-room library which they had but lately left. They placed him there upon a couch. Virginia Rawn rose and waved the man away. He hurried after help.

"Charley!" she said, turning to him; "can you talk?"

"A little. What is it, Jennie?"

"You're hurt bad—very bad."

"Through here," he said again, and touched his chest. His breath was hard. His garments were soaked with blood. His face was bluish-gray.

V

She looked into his soul the query of her own. Perhaps there was something not wholly unworthy in the

ulty, Laura, of doing the wrong thing. You've been a curse to me all my life!"

"Some of that's true, John," she answered simply, "and a good deal of it isn't. Maybe I said the wrong thing sometimes, or did the wrong thing. I never had much training. I was meant for Kelly Row, I reckon—I'd never have fitted in here. We tried it! But I didn't come to glorify myself because you've lost this place, and everything you had. I just thought—"

"Well, Laura, *what* was it that you just thought? I can't stand here talking all the time. It isn't right, it isn't proper. I'm worn out!"

"Of course it isn't, John. I'm going right away. But you see, when I came away I just thought this way—here am I, an old woman that don't need much money any more. And there's Grace;—and maybe now John has need for money when everybody's turned against him. And if he does need money, why—"

v

"What do you mean, Laura?" gasped John Rawn. "What's that you said about *money*?"

"How much would do you any good, John?" she asked, fumbling in her bulging hand-bag.

"I might as well wish for the moon as for a dollar," he said bitterly. "If I had a million, or a half million, to-morrow, I'd pull it all together, even yet."

"A half million, John?" she said, taking out of her bag a little, wrinkled, flat *porte-monnaie* such as women sometimes use for carrying change in their marketing; but still continuing her fumbling at the portly bag.

"Yes, if I had a half million I could put this company on its feet, even yet—the secret's out that Hal-sey had,—but I'd get it somewhere. I more than half believe those fellows *have* got it, somewhere else, somehow—that fellow Van's deep. You see, they've been fighting me, Laura—made up a gang against me! I know who it was. If I had a half million I'd throw in with Van—he's got this secret somehow—he knows something about it. I'd throw in with him, and we'd whip the others, even yet! I'd get it all back in my hands even yet, I tell you!

"But my God! Why do I stand talking about such things? What's the use? I'm down and out! I'd just as well be dead!"

"Well, John, what I always said of you was, that you seemed to know how to get things around the way you wanted them. I said to myself, what a shame it was he should have no money, when he needed it, and I should have so much when I didn't need it. I've got enough set aside to keep me, I reckon, for my few years. And here's what you gave me;—although, Grace—of course, John, I want enough used to put Grace and the baby away. The rest is yours."

He stood looking at her dumbly, as at last she extricated from the bag a thick bundle of folded papers, green, brown, pale pink.

"I got the bank to keep them for me," she said simply. "It is what you gave me—when—when I left here—"

He still stood looking at her, choking.

"Laura!" said he. "Has God come to my aid? This— I can't believe it! It's a million dollars! *It's*

mother was coming to her when she was in trouble. She hadn't seen my letter to her, telling I was coming. I knew she was in trouble—and I saw all the stories in the papers. I thought I'd tell her I was coming to her—and you, John. She was my girl, after all! I knew she was in trouble."

"How did you know?"

"Why, she wrote to me, of course. A girl always writes to her mother when she's in trouble. She wrote to me right often. She wasn't—well, she wasn't happy, John, and she often told me that. Something wrong was going on between her and Charley, I don't know what."

He stood looking at her, stupefied, as she went on, simply.

IV

"John, married folks oughtn't to be apart too much. They sort of get weaned from each other. Grace was too ambitious. She'd got, here, what she thought her husband couldn't get, what she'd come to think she had to have. I might have told her better, but I wasn't here. Not that I'm reproving you, John, not at all. Besides, we have all got to go, some day. But I loved her. . . . And the baby."

"So did I love her, and the baby," he began. Tears were in his eyes. "Laura, I have had nothing but trouble. And now you have come here—"

"Yes, I know; it must seem a little queer to you, John; so I'm going right away again, to-night—before morning, if there's any way I can get down-town."

"Yes, yes!"

"—Because, I know if I was seen around here, and

people found out who I am, who I—was—there might be some sort of talk which would be hard for you, John. I reckon you have trouble enough without that. I didn't want to bother you. I came mostly because of Grace. But—John, I always did like to tell the truth, and I have got to tell it now—I came a little, too, because of you!"

"Of me? Why Laura!"

"Yes, I did. I read the papers, of course, all the time. I have known about you, although you haven't heard of me. You have moved up in the world, John, and as for me—well, I have just gone back to Kelly Row, where we used to live. Of course, I'm glad you have been lucky. But then, lately, the papers all began to say you were in trouble. I've read all kinds of things about you. I heard you were ruined—that you hadn't a dollar left in all the world!"

"It's true," he growled; "as near as I know, it's true. There is no hope for me now. It's all up!"

"But, John, you had so *much* money!"

"Yes, but it's gone now. It doesn't take it long to go when it starts the other way. The market makes a man, and it breaks him just as quick, and a lot quicker. It's done me, Laura. I'm ruined. I haven't a thing left in the world; not even my wife. Have you come here to twit me with it? What do I owe *you*, that I have to listen to you?"

"Why, nothing, John, that's true; nothing at all, not in the least. I have no right here at all, I know that. I understood *that*, when I—when—I went away from here. But that wasn't why I came back to-night."

"Then why *did* you come? You always had the fac-

he had seen in the death chamber. He tiptoed now back to the library door, through which and beneath whose silken curtains still there pierced a little shaft of light. He opened the door, peered in.

He saw Virginia sitting there silent, white, unagitated, her features cameo-sharp, her skin waxen, indeed marble white, a woman as motionless, as silent, apparently as little animate as the one he had left behind him in the death chamber beyond the stair. She turned her eyes, not her face, toward him, but did not speak. The edge of her gown was moist, stained.

John Rawn looked in turn at the long figure upon the couch, motionless, silent, its hands folded. Neither did it speak to him. Suddenly oppressed, suddenly afraid, he turned once more away. Irresolution was in his soul, uncertainty.

Rawn was hardly sure that he still lived, that he still was the same John Rawn he once had known. It seemed impossible that all these things could have fallen upon him, who had not deserved them! He pitied himself with a vast pity, revolting at the many injustices of fortune now crowding upon him, a wholly blameless man. Why, a day before, he had held in his hand power such as few men could equal; had had, presently before him, power none other ever could hope to equal. That opportunity still existed. But how now could he avail himself of that opportunity, how could he go on to be the great John Rawn, if this figure on the couch could not arise, could not speak to him, could not perform the obvious duty of rendering needful assistance to him, John Rawn? The cruelty of it all rankled in the great and justice-loving soul of Mr. Rawn. Why, he was penniless—he—John

Rawn! He was not even sure about his wife, yonder. She had said things to him he could not understand, could not believe. . . .

He left the room, and walked still farther down the hall, his head sagging, his lower lip pendulous, his face warped into a pucker of self-pity—so absorbed, that at first he did not heed an approaching footfall. He paused almost in touch of some one who approached him in the half-lighted hall; some one who was coming down the stair and along the hall with steady tread.

III

There stood before him now the same tall, gray-haired, unfashionably dressed woman whom so recently he vaguely had noted at a distance in the hall above; some woman apparently busy with duties connected with the death chamber, as he had reflected when he saw her; some neighbor, he presumed, and certainly useful! It was kind of her to come at this time. He could not, at the time, recollect that he had seen her before. Yes, he would reward her—he would express his thanks.

He looked up at her now sharply, and gasped.

"Laura!" he exclaimed. "Is it you?"

"Why, yes, John," answered the tall, gaunt woman gently. "Didn't you see me, up there? I suppose you were too much troubled to notice me, John. Yes, I'm here. I thought maybe I ought to come.

"But you see—this—" she held out to him the letter she had picked up from the hall table. "This didn't get to her—Grace—not in time. She died this morning, before noon, they tell me. She never knew her

bond between them, since now it enabled them to talk, one soul with the other, almost without words. . . . The great, secret, all-powerful, world current, interstellar, not international, the one great power—of love, as she once said—was theirs. . . . Yes, it was theirs, if only for a little while.

"They've killed me," he began after a time—"I tried to do something for them. He—Rawn—would have used it for himself. I didn't want to. . . .

"Jennie," he said, after a time; "I beg pardon, Mrs. Rawn—I forgot—would you take the doll, the little rubber one on the table there, up to the baby? Poor little thing! Oh, well! . . ."

He sighed. She quietly laid him back upon the couch. She heard the blood drip, drip, through and across the brocaded couch, falling at the edge of the silken rug, on the polished floor, eddying there; thickening there.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT JOHN RAWN

I

FAR off, deep in the underground regions of the city, at the focus of the republic's vast industrialism, the presses were reeling and clanging again, heavy with their story of disaster. The civilization of the day went on.

Somewhere out upon the mountain tops, somewhere in the forests, the forces of nature gathered, marched on toward the sea. Somewhere dumbly, mutely, uncomplaining, the great river and its mate, the great power, inter-stellar, not international—they two, as he but now vauntingly had dreamed, erstwhile silent partners of John Rawn—did their work. . . . For whom? . . . For what? Answer that, my brothers. The answer is your own. As you and I shall speak in that answer, so shall our children eat well, sleep well, in days yet to come, in this country which we still call our own, now all too little ours.

II

It was far past midnight when John Rawn again came down the stair, sobered and whitened by what

the way I did before, when we were getting our start together, John, you know. I thought—maybe—you'd like a pair."

VIII

She held out to him a pair of braces, embroidered carefully in silks. He took them in his hand. She also looked at them closely, in professional scrutiny, her steel bowed spectacles on nose. She pronounced them good.

"But, John," she added curiously—"you know, while I was up there, doing what I could for Grace and the baby—it seemed to me like as if I heard some funny sort of noise down here—something like a shot. What was it?"

"It was some of those confounded laboring people," said John Rawn, frowning. "Yes—they came here after Halsey."

"Yes? But was anybody hurt?"

"Well," said John Rawn, "Halsey—Charley Halsey—you remember him, I believe? Well, they shot him.

—"Good-night, Laura," he added suddenly, and held out his hand to her, generously, nobly. "I'm very sleepy. I've been up so long—and I've a lot to do to-morrow. After all, there's no use in *our* having hard feelings. Good-by."

THE END

a million dollars!" His voice rose, breaking almost to a shriek. "It's a— It's—a—million—*dollars!"*

"Well, take it, John, it's yours; you're welcome to it. I don't want it. It's done me no good. It's done *none* of us any good. All I want is, that you should take care of Grace's funeral, for that's only right, John. She was my girl, my baby, my baby! Take care of her. John, I have got to go back—home!"

VI

In the next ensuing moment or so, what swift changes now were wrought in the late despair of our friend and hero, Mr. John Rawn, master of the International Power Company, already in imagination controlling in good part the destinies of a people—the great John Rawn, philanthropist, kindly employer, wise friend of the less favored ones of earth; the beneficent, kindly, omnipotent John Rawn? Why had he despaired, why had he ever doubted, why had he ever set himself even momentarily apart from that original destiny which always he had accorded to himself? Was he not a leader—had he not been devised to be so in the plans of the immortal gods, ages ago? Was he not one of the few select ones assigned to rule his fellow-men?

John Rawn stood before the old, gray woman, and scarcely heard her last words. He sighed deeply. His self-respect was coming back to him in waves, great, recurrent waves. At last a smile crossed his face. The imperious glance of the born ruler, of one better than his fellow-men, the look of the man set apart and licensed to rob and rule—returned once more to his eye.

VII

"*It's a million dollars!*" he cried aloud, exultantly, once more. "It's God has sent it to me! I'll take it as a sign. Watch me in the morning! I'll make them hunt their holes yet. By God! I will!"

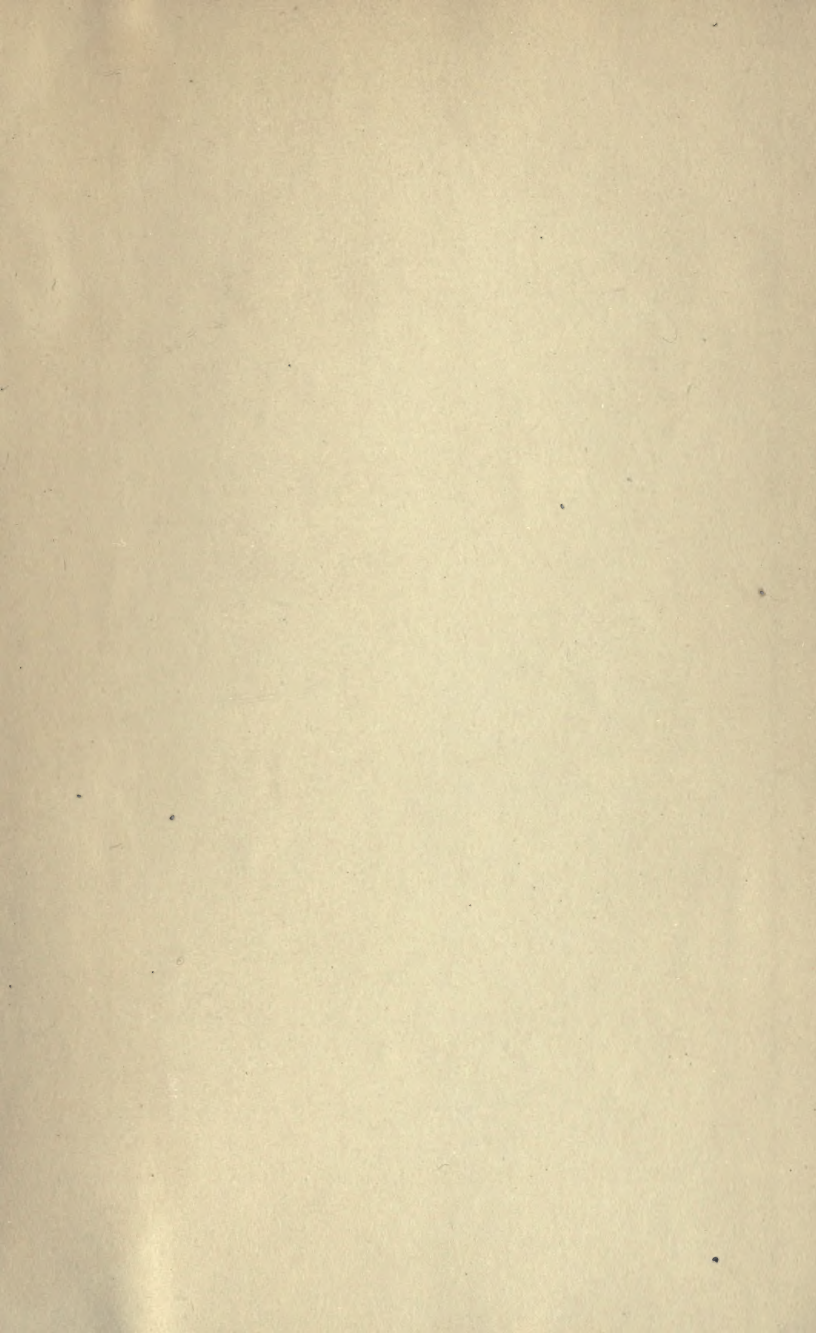
"John, John, you mustn't swear, it isn't right! John!"

"I beg your pardon—er—er—Laura," he rejoined, with fine condescension, every instant now becoming more himself. "In fact, I want to thank you—it's clever of you, I must say. It isn't every woman who'd have *done* what you have done, I'm sure."

"Why wouldn't they, John? It isn't *money* a woman wants to make her happy. I've tried that. Grace tried it. It doesn't work. It takes something else besides money, I reckon. We're lucky when we find that, any of us, I reckon. If we don't, we've got to take just what God gives us. But money doesn't buy everything in the world. John, sometimes I think it buys about as little as anything you can think of!" She gulped just a little in her thin throat.

"All the same," said he firmly and generously, by this time almost fully the great John Rawn once more, "it was very decent of you, Laura."

"Well, never mind about that, John. It was you who made it. I never did understand how you earned it so fast. I'm glad if it will do you any good—if you're *sure* it will do you any good. And see, John," she added shyly, fumbling again in her bag, "I brought you a little present, John. I've been doing these, you see. I make quite a lot out of it. I never used any of that money you gave me, at all—I did these things—





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